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THE
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
ITS
ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.

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THE
RUSSIAN EMPIRE:

ITS
Origin and Development.

BY
S. B. BOULTON.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE history of Russia has been far less studied in this country than its importance deserves. My own interest and attention had been closely directed to the country for more than twenty years before I was able personally to visit it; and in the present little work I have attempted to embody some of the results of my studies on Russian history and politics, as well as of my observation of the country and people. The space at my disposal is not sufficient to admit of much fulness of detail, but I trust, at least, that my sketch is accurate and complete as far as it goes, and that it will serve to convey some idea of the main facts relative to the growth of this most wonderful of modern empires. I have throughout given references to more comprehensive works, for the benefit of those students who may be desirous of obtaining a closer view of some of the many sides of this vast subject.

The book will be found to contain in its first three chapters an account of my first journey to Russia in 1874. Next there is a series of sketches in chapters v. to xi. which furnish a slight but continuous chain of historical records, from the first appearance of the germs of Russian national existence down to our own times. Chap. xii. contains a brief summary of facts regarding the present condition of the empire; and finally there is appended a chronological table, containing the dates of the principal events in Russian and contemporary history, together with those of the reigns of the Russian princes, from Rurik to Alexander III.

S. B. BOULTON.

*Copped Hall, Totteridge, Herts.
March, 1882.*

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE:

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CHAPTER I.

A VISIT TO ST. PETERSBURGH.

Journey from Königsburgh to St. Petersburg—First impressions of Russia—Arrival at St. Petersburg—Description of the City—Cronstadt—Tsarskoé Selo—Pavlovsk—Petershof—St. Petersburg the type of Modern Russian Autocracy.

UPON a certain day in August I found myself at length in a position to realise my long-cherished desire of visiting Russia. Accompanied by three members of my family, I had halted upon my way from Berlin to St. Petersburg in order to visit the ancient city of Königsburgh, the Baltic port and stronghold of the Teutonic Knights, who, with their confederates, the Knights Sword-bearers, had for centuries played so great a part in the history of Poland, of Prussia, and of Russia. To this spot, in the year 1255, had come the puissant Ottocar, King of Bohemia, and in his retinue, as we are reminded by Carlyle,* followed a poor knight, one Rudolf von

* Carlyle's "History of Frederick the Great," vol. i., chap. vi., concerning the Teutonic order.

Hapsburgh, whose fortunes and dynasty did thereafter so marvellously blossom and flourish. Ottocar came with his army to assist the Teutonic Knights in a campaign against the heathen Prussians, and here he founded a fort—the “King’s Fort”—and handed it over to the valiant monastic brotherhood. When in 1525 the Grand-Master, Albert of Brandenburg, threw off his monastic vows, and turned his Grand-Mastership into a Dukedom of Prussia, feudatory to Poland, the City of Königsburgh became a valuable bulwark for the straggling Principality which the astute and fighting race of the Hohenzollerns was laboriously piecing together. Truly a suggestive place is this Königsburgh to a student of the history of this wild Baltic coast.

But whatever its past history, Königsburgh is now a thoroughly Germanised and highly-thriving commercial sea-port, rejoicing much in its recollections of the not-to-be-lightly-understood philosopher, Kant, and very exceedingly in its brisk trade in timber, corn, tallow, and flax.

We took our places in the mid-day train for a thirty-one hours’ journey to St. Petersburg, and between five and six the same evening we acquired our first experiences upon Russian territory, at the frontier station of Wirballen. The change from Germany to Russia, in language, costumes, and manners, was abrupt and startling. The station was crowded with passengers of various ranks and conditions, owing to the change of trains at the frontier, and the examination of luggage and of

passports; and the most striking types of character, as outwardly exemplified, were, as usual, to be found amongst the lower classes. The male peasants seemed to have inverted the order of adjusting apparel which usually prevails with us. At first sight it appeared as if with one accord they had put on their shirts over all their other articles of dress, and stuffed their trousers into their boots by way of completing the arrangement. In point of fact, they all wore high boots and loose blouses of various colours, with a bright-coloured scarf tied round the waist. The Moujik (or peasant) is extremely fond of a blouse, or shirt of cotton, dyed a bright red. In winter a long sheep-skin coat, with the wool turned inwards, is added to the costume; a cap of fur or of curled lamb's-wool surmounting the whole. Women in bright-hued cotton garments; military officers with clinking spurs and sabres, a broad cloak thrown over their uniform, and distended at the shoulders by the epaulettes, marking an apparently portentous width of chest and back; priests of the Greek rite, with their long flowing hair, and a cross suspended from their necks; native merchants with their distinctive and sober costume; many Germans smoking much tobacco; these were some of the elements of the rapidly moving and gesticulating throng.

In and out of the crowd, with keen and wary glance, moved a characteristic figure—the travelling Jew money-changer. Unmistakable in feature, and with his individuality still further marked by his long, greasy gaberdine, he was driving a roaring trade.

The currency of Russia is entirely in rouble notes,* which, not being redeemable, are at a heavy discount, varying from day to day with the foreign exchanges. It is necessary for the traveller in Russia to be supplied with this paper money, and the Jew dealer can produce from the intricacies of his shabby garments sundry shining leather packets, stuffed with an apparently inexhaustible supply of paper wealth. Our Hebrew friend is fluent in his calculations, and flutters and flourishes his bank-notes with bewildering rapidity. As you watch him you see that he never hesitates for a moment, whilst, on the other hand, a puzzled look is apt to appear upon the countenances of his customers, and you instinctively feel that *should* there be any mistake, the odds are that the dealer will not be the loser. Yet, if you know the course of exchange, and if *he knows* that you know it, you will probably make a better bargain with him than at the Exchange Office in the nearest town. “Ach Gott! er versteht!” was the ejaculation of a venerable Israelite, when upon a similar occasion, and upon the Austrian frontier, I gave proof of my painfully-acquired experience of the mysteries of the exchange between Russian roubles and Austrian florins, and thereupon his manner changed as if by magic, and desisting from any further argument in favour of an ingenious computation which was wholly his own, he sat down in the refreshment-room and we made a

* What is called the silver rouble is nominally worth about 3s. 2½d., but its visible existence is mythical. Its paper representative is at the present moment worth about 2s. 1d.

neat little sun together with chalk upon a table. The result was the extraction of a further supply of notes from the near vicinity of his heart. A Polish lady looked on in admiration, and accosting me in French, begged that I would superintend a little exchange operation for her also, which being accomplished, I walked back to my carriage much elevated in the opinion of my fellow-travellers.

From the turmoil and confusion of the crowded station at Wirballen, aggravated in our case by the peculiar impression which the brain receives from conversations and shoutings in an unknown tongue, we at length found ourselves seated in the Russian train, and again starting on our journey. Our carriage was provided with a large stove, not at present in use, for the weather was warm, but a very necessary appliance during the rigours of a Russian winter. The locomotive which drew us was of a different type to the German one which we had left behind at the frontier. Its funnel-shaped chimney and capacious tender, loaded with logs of fir and birch, shewed us that we were entering upon a land of forests, where wood is the ordinary fuel for all purposes. And, in fact, the country which we now traversed appeared to be one vast level plain, covered for the most part with forests as far as the eye could reach. The prevailing tint of the landscape is derived from the sombre green of the fir-trees, but on the outskirts of the woods, the beautiful white bark and graceful pendulous foliage of the silver birch shewed, by contrast, such images of delicate loveliness as to

justify the title given to the latter tree of the "Lady of the Forest." The villages were few and at very long intervals; sometimes they could only be distinguished by the coloured domes of the quaint little churches, surmounted by the peculiar form of cross which is a distinctive symbol of the orthodox faith. On we go, until at Kovno we pass the river Niemen, in the midst of whose waters, lower down, at Tilsit, Napoleon I. and Alexander I. met upon a raft to sign their Treaty of Peace. Later on we pass through Vilna. The evening light, protracted in this latitude to a much later hour than with us, begins to fade; the interminable lines of dark-green foliage become blurred and dim. We seek our cushions, and arrange ourselves for that modified form of nightmare which in a nocturnal railway journey passes under the name of sleep. Jammed into positions which are constantly changing independently of our own volition, we seem to experience many of the sensations of motion similar to a ship's rolling, with a little pitching thrown in to the bargain, the whole diversified, however, by violent shocks and joltings administered by some intrusive demons whose approach you instinctively feel, although the energy acquired for putting them to flight is lacking. Suddenly, and with a dexterous twirl, one of them succeeds in bumping your head and half-dislocating your neck, and after shaking from his sooty wings a grimy powder which sticks in your half-awakened eyes, and chokes your nostrils, you know by the violent vibration of the sashes that he has escaped through the window, and

you hear his unearthly scream of triumph ringing out far and clear under the midnight sky.

At length, in right earnest, we are all awakened together by the stoppage of the train, succeeded by a heavy rapping at the door, and a loud shout of "Tchay! Tchay!" What in the world is the matter? Is the train on fire; or has it run off the rails? Are robbers looting the carriages, or (a milder form of misery) is there some misunderstanding about our passports? Oh, that we understood Russ! What, oh what, is the meaning of the mysterious cry of "Tchay?" Our senses are half-numbed by our sudden awakening, and we pull up the blinds, and open the door cautiously. Light streams in, and a heavily-booted and fiercely-moustached individual presents himself. But the light is the light of day, and the countenance of our fierce interlocutor is endeavouring to beam with a friendly aspect. And lo! he balances upon the palm of his left hand a tray, and upon it are four glass tumblers filled with fragrant *tea*, and upon the surface of each glass of tea floats a slice of lemon. Behold, it is early morning; the train has stopped at a station during our feverish slumbers, and most delicate and refreshing in its results is the attention of the amiable guard of the train.

In the course of our travels we soon learned to welcome the name of "Tchay." Tea is a great institution in Russia, and the samovar, or tea-urn, is kept constantly going in all households, as well as at hotels, country inns, or railway buffets. At all

places of public entertainment the tea is usually taken in glass tumblers instead of in cups ; as the glass becomes hot a metal case with a handle is often added, to hold the tumbler and prevent its burning the hand, and as an article of luxury this metal case is sometimes made of silver-gilt or enamelled. The substitution of lemon for milk or cream greatly adds to the refreshing properties of the beverage.

During the night we had passed Dunaburgh, from whence, towards the east, branches a line to Smolensk and Moscow, whilst to the west goes the rail to the important commercial port of Riga. Numerous are the streams which drain into the river Duna, on its course to the Gulf of Riga, and at certain seasons of the year so great is the quantity of timber floated down them, that the streams actually appear like moving masses of wood rather than like water-courses. The trees are felled during the winter, whilst the ground is covered with snow, and with a broad axe the peasants rough-hew the logs to a rectangular section, or, when the wood is to be left in the round, they simply chip off the bark. In this manner are shaped the many millions of railway-sleepers which are exported to England for its own railways, and also through England, by re-exportation, to all parts of the globe. And when the snows melt in the spring, and augment the volume of the tiniest streams, the logs, dragged into the nearest water-course, are floated down *en masse*, until at convenient places, and in the broader currents, they are collected and fastened by rope and staples into regular rafts, and

so navigated down the rivers to the nearest shipping port.

For a commercial sea-port Riga is better situated than St. Petersburg, and many have thought that Peter the Great would have done better to have made it his capital, rather than to have founded his wonderful new city amidst the swamps of Ingria.

On we go, through Ostrof, passing through the province of Pskoff, until we reach the ancient town of that name, the former seat of a self governing republic in the old Russian times; a republic after the pattern of Novgorod, and in close alliance therewith; afterwards the seat of one of the numerous principalities ruled over by the descendants of Rurik. To the north-west we see in the distance the Lake of Pskoff, part of the great Peïpous Lake, upon which Peter the Great launched a hundred galleys, and beat the Swedes, preparatory to taking the town of Dorpat, and its ninety-eight pieces of cannon. And now we are passing through the classic ground of ancient Russian history; the country between Lake Ilmen on the east, Lake Ladoga on the north, and the Gulf of Finland on the west—the territory of the old Republic of Novgorod; “Lord Novgorod the Great,” as it was fondly called by its citizens in the time of its power and its splendour. Alas for vanished greatness! The railway disdainfully leaves on one side, some forty miles to the east, the great discrowned potentate and parent of the Russian Empire. The ancient Novgorod* has sunk into the position of a dull provincial town.

* This old Novgorod, situated on the banks of the river Volkow,

At length, towards the evening of this our second day of imprisonment in the train, we notice that tracts of cleared and cultivated land are becoming more common, and villages more frequent. Detached houses of a larger description, and many of the other indications of the near approach to a large city, present themselves. Suddenly, upon the distant horizon, we catch a gleam as it were of a dome of fire. It is the dome of the great Izak church, covered with plates of gold, and glowing in the rays of the setting sun. Numerous towers and spires now thicken on our view ; we rush on through a straggling suburb, and behold, we are in St. Petersburg !

At the station we were met by a Russian friend, Count R——, to whose kindness we became indebted, not only for an introduction to his circle, and for a sagacious and pains-taking pilotage during our explorations of St. Petersburg, but also for a frank and cordial invitation to visit him at his country estate, an invitation of which we afterwards gladly availed ourselves.

St. Petersburg is the youngest of all the European capitals. Its site was but a desert swamp in the province of Ingria, when Peter the Great announced his intention of erecting his new capital here, and its erection was indeed a *tour de force*, both from the point of view of the engineer, and from that of the Statesman. Not only so, but the

near Lake Ilmen, must not be confounded with Nijni Novgorod, the present seat of the great annual fair, at the confluence of the Volga and the Oka.

very soil belonged to the Swedes, whose victorious monarch, Charles XII., was beating Peter and his ally Augustus of Poland, in every pitched battle in which they encountered each other. Notwithstanding which the audacious Peter in 1702, actually commenced the building of the city within his rival's dominions. A Swedish fort and Swedish troops were in the neighbourhood; Peter and his followers had to fight as well as to dig and to build. The most formidable obstacles, however, were those arising from the swampy and insalubrious nature of the ground. Peter personally superintended the works, and overcame all difficulties by his indomitable energy, and by the exercise of his despotic power. Workmen were brought from all parts of his dominions to labour in digging the canals; more than 100,000 men are said to have perished from disease and exhaustion. Through the swamp flowed the river Neva, which by many continually overflowing channels carried the waters of Lake Ladoga to the Gulf of Finland. Peter drained the marshes, and embanked the Neva, which now runs through the city in numerous streams, some of them of considerable width. There are fourteen arms or branches of the river, and seven canals, the whole spanned by no less than 150 bridges. Only one of these bridges, the Nikolayevski, erected in 1870, is a permanent structure; all the rest are built upon boats or pontoons, and have to be removed during the winter. For much of this work of canalisation, and for many other improvements, the city is indebted to Catherine II.

St. Petersburg possesses none of the quaint characteristics which still linger in so many of the old capitals of Europe, with mediæval survivals of narrow streets, old overhanging wooden buildings with carven fronts, quaint archways, embattled walls, and glorious Gothic cathedrals.

But its long wide streets and immense squares, its stately piles of palaces and magnificent churches of the Greek ritual, the whole enlivened by the many arms of the river which course through the city in swift, broad, and sparkling currents—all these features combine to make it a city *sui generis*, a capital without a counterpart in the whole world.

A fine broad avenue runs through St. Petersburg, called the Nevski Prospect. It is 130 feet wide, and four miles in length. Amongst the splendid edifices which adorn this fine street, are the Izak and the Kazan churches. The dome of the Izak Church, which attracted our attention from afar upon our approach by railway, is of enormous size, framed of bronze plates, and covered with burnished gold. The gold covering alone is said to have cost £50,000 of our money. The interior of this church is of surpassing magnificence. Malachite and lapis lazuli are lavished upon the pillars and walls, whilst behind the altar are some magnificent mosaics of beautiful execution and enormous size. Unfortunately, the treacherous, swampy soil is continually giving way beneath the building, and large sums have to be expended from time to time, it is said but with very partial success, in endeavouring to improve the foundations.

The Kazan Church, a partial imitation on a small scale of St. Peter's, at Rome, is celebrated for the massive balustrade, in solid silver, erected in front of the sanctuary, but still more so for its miraculous Ikon, or picture of our Lady of Kazan. This wonderful picture is devoutly believed to have flown through the air, of its own volition, all the way from the town of Kazan, a distance of about 750 miles in a direct line, as—holy pictures—fly!

The Winter Palace is an enormous quadrangular structure, of which each of the sides is about 700 feet long. It was one of the stock phrases respecting this palace to say, that when the Emperor was in residence about 6,000 human beings inhabited it. But it is difficult to recall the ordinary impressions of a tourist as they presented themselves to me at the time of my visit, considering the terrible event which has since connected this building with the last moments of the murdered Alexander II.

In the Hermitage, a separate palace, there is a very fine collection of pictures, amongst which the Spanish and the Dutch schools are most adequately represented. It also contains an enormous wealth of vases and other works of art, in porcelain, malachite, lapis-lazuli, and porphyry. There is also annexed to this palace a museum of objects of interest connected with the person and pursuits of Peter the Great.

The admiralty building, with its slender gilded spire 230 feet high, is a conspicuous landmark over plain and stream for many miles around.

Perhaps the most interesting of all the monuments to be seen in St. Petersburg and its neighbourhood, is the wooden hut which Peter caused to be constructed, and in which he lodged whilst laying the foundations of his new capital. Part of it is now used as a chapel, and it is regarded with great veneration, whilst the Ikon suspended upon its walls, which was used by Peter, is believed by the peasants to work miracles. Religiously preserved also is the first vessel which Peter caused to be constructed—a large sailing-boat; the first keel laid down for the Russian navy.

About seventeen miles down the river is the great fort and arsenal of Cronstadt, also erected by the indefatigable Peter. Here likewise is the commercial port for foreign vessels, as the Neva at St. Petersburg itself is only deep enough for craft of light draught.

We visited several of the public entertainment gardens, and in one of them we heard a number of songs given by a choir of Russian peasants, led by a handsome, white-bearded old man. All were dressed in Moujik costume. Some of the songs were comic, and accompanied by violent dancing and gesticulation, but most of them were of that plaintive nature which seems characteristic of Russian melodies. The language is soft and melodious, and adapts itself well to lyrical music; in fact, the Russian tongue is aptly called “the Italian of the north.” Dining at one of these gardens, I noticed that the waiters, when talking amongst themselves, spoke a language which sounded to my ears as differing entirely from the

Russ. Upon inquiry, I found that, although accurately got up in the conventional swallow-tail and white tie, they were Tartars, speaking their own tongue. Tartars are much employed as waiters, and also as porters and messengers in banks and other mercantile establishments; they are much esteemed for their honesty, and also for the enforced sobriety inculcated by their Mahometan faith.

Amongst other excursions, we visited the Emperor's summer palace at Tsarksoé Selo, an enormous building standing in the midst of magnificent parks and gardens. There is here a fine collection of ancient arms and armour, and amongst them are shown two complete suites of plate armour, *cap-à-pié*, which were made for the Emperor Nicholas, and his son, afterwards Alexander II., on the occasion of a tournament *à l'Eglintoun*. This armour had to be made expressly, as, upon ransacking the stores of ancient panoplies, no suites could be found large enough for the stalwart frames of the two imperial jousters. In the evening we drove over to Pavlovsk, and in the public gardens there we enjoyed a fine performance of instrumental music, a sort of promenade concert. A small group of officers promenaded amongst the visitors, and the tall form of one of them in naval uniform was pointed out to us as the Grand Duke Constantine Nicolaïévitch, the Emperor's brother.

At Petershof, which we reached by steamer, is yet another of the imperial palaces, situated amidst beautiful gardens, with a long vista of fountains and cascades, terminating in a fine view over the

Gulf of Finland. The terraces and cascades in front of the palace are laid out in the formal style of Versailles, or perhaps more closely resembling St. Cloud as it existed before the Franco-German war. Our Russian friend, who before entering the army had been one of the imperial *Corps des Pages* during the reign of Nicholas, described one of the diversions of that monarch in connection with these cascades. The Emperor, accompanied by his court, would station himself on the upper terrace, and cause the great waterworks to be set in motion. The water, rushing in powerful streams, falls from basin to basin, as it were, down a series of gigantic steps, until it reaches the large reservoir below ; the great fountains and hundreds of *jets d'eau* issuing from the mouths of quaint monsters, and from all sorts of orifices, spurting vast torrents of water in every direction. The *Corps des Pages* would be drawn up on the bottom terrace, and at a given signal they would receive the word of command to "storm the cascades." The result was sufficiently amusing ; happy the youths who avoided being knocked over into the great basin by one of the jets of water, whilst the drenched young hero who first waded and climbed his way to the top of the cascades received a prize at the hands of the Emperor. In these gardens, at a distance from the palace, and in the midst of some plantations, is a complete model of a peasant's log hut, erected by Nicholas as an agreeable surprise for his Empress, who had expressed her great admiration for a similar building which she had seen in the course of her travels. The

Empress was conducted by stratagem to the hut, which had been built during her absence, and on its threshold she was met by the Emperor, dressed in peasant costume, who, taking her by the hand, led her inside, and assured her that both the hut and its owner were devoted to her service. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;" and this incident is the more interesting as contrasting with that sterner side of the character of Nicholas, with which, especially during the latter part of his life, the outer world was made most familiar.

St. Petersburg is peculiarly interesting to the thoughtful traveller, as the visible and substantial type of those new impulses which Peter the Great imparted to the destinies of Russia. His commanding genius and indomitable will gave a fresh departure to the national progress, both in the enforced adoption of the outward and material appliances of western civilisation, and also in the organisation of the State for purposes civil and military.

It is the typical city of the modern Russian autocracy; the head-quarters of a highly centralised administration. Further than this, it is not only, as Peter described it, "*a window through which Russia could look out upon the western world;*" it is also the *door* through which western ideas have entered in, and are engaged in fierce contest with the old Slavonic and Muscovite traditions of the empire.

CHAPTER II.

A VISIT TO A NOBLEMAN'S ESTATE.

Journey with Count R———Arrival at his Country Residence—A Village of Emancipated Serfs—Antiquity of Serfdom—Its Development in Russia—Its Abolition by Alexander II.—General Rostovzoff—The Mir and the Provincial Assemblies in Ancient Times and at Present—A Peasant's Bath—Peasant's Lands—An Emigration Embassy—Visit to another Country House—Return to St. Petersburg.

LEAVING St. Petersburg, in order to avail ourselves of the hospitable invitation of our friend, Count R——, to his estate in the country, we undertook with him a railway journey of several hours duration, which brought us to the little provincial station of B——. Here we found awaiting us carriages belonging to the Count, ready to convey us and our luggage to his residence, a distance of about thirty miles. Each of these carriages was drawn by four horses, yoked all abreast. Away we started at a gallop, and as our rough-looking wiry little steeds were full of mettle, we went like the wind. Our course was at times over extensive plains, and then through long stretches of forest, where occasionally the track was so narrow that the two outside horses appeared to be courting concussion of the brain from contact with the fir-trees. They had a peculiar knack of stretching out their necks sideways, so that the heads of the four steeds described the arc of a circle, and the

"shaves" appeared to our unaccustomed nerves both close and frequent.

Presently we came to a stream, which we crossed, but not *over* it; for the Count sententiously remarked, "The bridge is doubtful, but the bottom of the stream is sure; please put up your legs on the seats." And accordingly we dashed down the sloping side of the bank, and with a whiz and a whirl into the stream. The current was running fast, and looked formidable, as the water made its way over the floor of the carriage, but the horses floundered and scrambled through, and then with a vigorous dose of whip they made their way up the further side, and our hands relinquished their rigid clutch of the rails of the vehicle. "Our rural assemblies are not fond of the cost of repairing bridges; you manage better in England," said our friend, politely. Towards evening we arrived safely at S——, the estate of our host, where we were received with a hearty welcome from the Countess, an old acquaintance of English birth, who, with her children, was awaiting our arrival on the verandah of the house.

Everything which surrounded us at S—— appeared curious and novel, and our enjoyment was greatly enhanced by the intelligent explanations and intellectual conversations of our host and hostess, and by the polyglot prattle of their interesting and lovable children. Son of the late General R——, who up to the time of his death had been one of the Cabinet Ministers of the Emperor Alexander II., our host had been brought up at Court in the *Corps des*

.

Pages, until he became of age to enter the army. He received his commission during the Crimean War, and took part in the defence of Sebastopol, where he served on the staff, and he told me many interesting anecdotes of that great struggle. After attaining the rank of colonel, and of aide-de-camp to the Emperor, he travelled through Europe, and, visiting our country, made the acquaintance of the English lady who became his wife, after which he retired from the military service. Like most educated Russians, the Count was an accomplished linguist, speaking five languages (including English) with fluency.

I was extremely anxious for information respecting the emancipation and present condition of the peasants, and I esteemed myself fortunate, whilst walking through a village of emancipated serfs within the borders of his estate, to obtain a lucid description of the whole process from the son of one of the most able of the administrators who assisted in carrying it out.

The question is somewhat closely connected with the old Slavonic institution of the *Mir*, or self-governing community. This institution had in early times received a peculiar development in Russia. Each village *Konne*, or *Mir*, selected its own elder, and settled its affairs by assemblies of the inhabitants; and women, if heads of families, were allowed votes as well as the men. Several villages would unite to form an *Obchtchestvo*, or commune, and these communes, in federative union, composed a *Volost*, or larger commune. And the *Volosts* in the ancient

times sometimes combined to found a city. Such is said to have been the origin of the oldest cities of Russia, Kieff, Smolensk, and Novgorod, and the system of organisation by *Konnetz*, or *Mirs*, was maintained in their municipal government.

Nevertheless, the possession of such extremely democratic institutions at an early period of their history did not prevent the growth of personal slavery amongst the Russians. M. de Circourt speaks of serfdom as a Polish malady introduced into the Russian body politic in comparatively modern times; and "O. K.," who quotes him, states that before the Tartars serfdom was unknown in Russia.* I cannot quite agree with this accomplished lady, nor with her authority. In the code of laws of Vladimir Monomachus, who died in 1125 A.D., there are full and minute regulations, both as to those slaves who are absolutely the chattels of their masters, to be bought and sold at their will, and also as to various categories of serfs over whom the power of the Seigneurs had certain defined limitations.† Serfdom existed at one time or another over nearly the whole of Europe. Its former prevalence in England may still be traced in the names of no less than twenty-two villages called Charlton (Ceorl, or Churl, town) scattered over our country. And although we were amongst the earliest of the nations to rid ourselves of this degrading institution, it did not

* "O. K.," "Russia and England," pp., 206, 41.

† Nicolas de Gerebtzoff's "Histoire de la Civilisation en Russie," chap. xxiv.

entirely disappear from us until the reign of Queen Elizabeth. In Germany, the last traces of agrarian slavery were only extinguished during the early part of the present century.

In Russia, the calamities of the Tartar invasion tended greatly to increase the proportion of the servile classes, by rendering them more dependent upon the armed nobles for aid and protection. Later on, in order to check the migratory habits which misery and rapine had introduced amongst large bodies of the peasantry, the Muscovite princes ordered them to stay, or become *fixed* (Krepostnoi) upon certain lands. The edicts of Ivan the Terrible and of Boris Godounoff are notable examples. Boyards were appointed as superintendents over them, and in many instances assumed by degrees and finally maintained hereditary seigniorial rights over these "fixed" peasants. The name "Kholope Krepostnoi" became a synonym for a serf attached to the glebe.*

Up to the time of Peter the Great there still remained, however, a large number of free peasants. For the purpose of imposing a capitation tax, Peter decreed that a complete census should be taken of all classes of peasants indiscriminately, and that for convenience of registration they should all remain fixed or "firm" (Krepok) on the lands where they had been inscribed on the census. "Krepostnoi" is derived from "Krepok," and the similarity in the terms, together with some ambiguity in the decree,

* Wallace's "Russia," vol. ii., pp. 240 to 246. W. Hepworth Dixon's "Free Russia" vol. ii.

was construed, according to Gerebtzoff, in a sense inimical to the liberty of the peasant. The Seigneurs assumed that they had become invested with personal and hereditary rights of property over the hitherto free peasants. Contrary, therefore, as it is supposed to Peter's intention, these last became merged in the mass of the "Krepostnoi."*

To the Emperor Alexander II. belongs the glory of emancipating 45,000,000 of his subjects by his famous edicts of 1861; and amongst the names which should go down to posterity as having been associated with the Sovereign in effecting this mighty reform, one of the most honoured names should be that of General Rostovzoff. Selected by the Emperor as a cabinet minister, and favoured with his personal friendship, both on account of his talents and for his liberal opinions, Rostovzoff worked earnestly to bring about the great deliverance, and laboured indefatigably upon the enormous administrative measures necessary for its success. On each recurring anniversary of the death of this faithful servant, Alexander was in the habit of testifying his affection for his memory by paying a personal visit to his widow. At the residence of this lady, in St. Petersburg, I was shown a fine bust, in bronze, of the deceased minister, which had been presented to his family by the Emperor. *Palmarum qui meruit ferat!*

The work was enormous and the risk considerable. Scattered as they were over a vast area, it was necessary not merely to decree the freedom of this vast

* "Gerebtzoff," vol. ii., p. 75.

mass of human beings, but also to ensure them means of subsistence, and to establish a *modus vivendi* between them and the lords of the soil without obliterating the rights of property.

In the first place, it was decreed that the domestic serfs should serve their masters for two years from the date of the edict, after which time they would become absolutely free. The agricultural serfs were liberated at once, and a certain quantity of land on each estate, together with their houses and gardens, were handed over to each serf village, subject to a fixed rental payable to the former proprietor. The rental, either in money or in labour, sometimes partly in both, was fixed by assessors appointed by the Government, who at the same time made a fixed valuation of the fee-simple of the land. Upon the basis of this last valuation, the peasants were decreed a pre-emptive right of purchase, a right to redeem themselves and their lands for ever from all rent or *corrée* to the seigneur. The seigneur, on his side, had a right to demand that this redemption should take place ; but if the demand came from him, and not from the peasants, he was to receive only four-fifths of the stipulated value. In either case the Government provides the means for the redemption. It pays the seigneur for the land, in bonds, at 15 years' date, bearing 5 per cent. interest, and it recoups itself by an amortizement rent charged to the peasants, payable during 45 years, at 6 per cent. upon the purchase money.

Under these conditions the land was handed over, but the old Russian system of the village Mir was

revived, and the property was transferred, not to the individual peasant, but to the self-governing village community. The heads of households of each village meet in open assembly ; from time to time they elect their Staroster, or Elder, and they apportion and re-apportion, as often as they think proper, the strips of land which each family may cultivate for its separate use and benefit. The Mir is responsible collectively for all dues and taxes, and it makes each strip of land liable for its share in those burdens *pro rata*. The division is commonly made according to the number of souls in each family, or to their capability of bearing their share of these charges. It thus happens that in some districts the families will be anxious to get as large, and in others as small, a share of the communal lands as possible, according to the fertility of the soil and the greater or less weight of the dues and taxes.

The peasants on the Crown domains, who numbered rather more than one-half of the total number of serfs, were emancipated by separate decrees.

The ancient communal institutions of Russia have been described at page 25. The modern Mir and the new District Assemblies, so minutely described by Mr. Wallace, bear evidence that Alexander II. has resuscitated old Slavonic institutions of a somewhat democratic character. Under the new *régime* each province is divided into districts, and each district has its own Zemstvo, or Assembly, whose members are elected in fixed proportions by the peasant Mirs, the corporations of the towns, and the landed proprietors.

The district assemblies elect delegates to a larger or provincial Assembly. Considering how recently the peasant has been the chattel of the seigneur, and that the latter has, as a rule, suffered pecuniary loss by the emancipation, it is to the credit of both classes that they are said to meet and to work harmoniously together.

It must be understood that political questions are rigorously excluded from the deliberations of these assemblies. They decide upon roads, bridges, schools and public buildings, and other matters of local interest. Is it not, however, reasonable to surmise that the social and political education of the peasant will be improved, and his stock of ideas enlarged, by his participation in these extended measures of self-government? And is it too chimerical to suppose that from these assemblies might perchance arise, in the fulness of time, some system of electoral colleges for the choice of representatives to some future great National Council? Such, at least, would appear to be more desirable to reasonable lovers of liberty than the wild dreams of the extreme revolutionists.

Upon a corner of his grounds the Count had erected a bathing hut for his peasants. Complete ablutions are enjoined by the Russian Church as a necessary preparation for the religious observances of each Sunday or saint's day. The saints' days are very numerous in the Russian calendar, and this ecclesiastical ordinance tends greatly to mitigate the effects of uncleanly habits amongst the rural population. On one Saturday evening I was a spectator of their favourite method of taking a bath.

The door and windows of the hut being closed, a large flat stone was placed on the top of a stove, and when the stone was thoroughly hot, water was poured upon it until the hut was filled with steam. The men divested themselves of their clothes and squatted down in this stifling atmosphere. One second's personal investigation of this stage of the operation—all that I dared endure—led me to surmise that a potato might be very thoroughly cooked by being simply held in the hand of a bather. When one of the men had become sufficiently parboiled, the door of the hut opened, a red-hot human form emerged, halted for a moment whilst an attendant boy poured over its head a bucket of cold water, and then, with a rush and a plunge, the bather dashed into the river, rolled over and over in the shallow bed of the stream, and wriggled amongst the pebbles in a perfect ecstacy of enjoyment. Let me suggest this simple method to those who are prevented by distance from repairing to a regular Turkish bath establishment. I was told that this practice was continued throughout the winter, a plunge into the snow being substituted for immersion in the river when the stream becomes too thickly frozen for the bathers to break through the ice.

Much of the land was not under regular cultivation, a good deal of it in forests, and a considerable area in rough pasture land. The peasants' lands could be at once recognised on the landscape by the long, narrow strips of diverse colours, resulting from the various crops which were grown by different families of cultivators. In this north-western province, which

we were visiting, these strips were principally of rye, oats, flax, buck-wheat, and hemp, wheat being of very rare occurrence, owing to the shortness of the season making this last cereal a very precarious crop. It was harvest time; men, women, and children were engaged in harvesting, and the scantiness of their garments, owing to the heat of the weather, and the bright colour with which their cotton habiliments were tinted, gave to the whole scene an aspect of Oriental rather than of northern life. 'The peasants' villages are composed of wooden huts, often dotted about at irregular intervals and at queer angles, without reference to any straight line; as may frequently be seen in Switzerland, and in some of the villages in the highlands of Scotland. The huts are commonly formed of round logs, placed across and across, and fitted into each other by a very ingenious joint or mortise, which is cut out with the broad axe, the woodman's ordinary tool. The interstices between the logs are stuffed, or caulked, with tow, and the crossed ends of the logs project at the four corners of the building. In huts of a superior kind, the inner parts of the logs, which form the interior walls of the dwelling, are sometimes squared and varnished, or otherwise ornamented, but this is a somewhat uncommon æsthetic luxury. The arrangements for cleanliness and sanitation in general leave very much to be desired.

Amongst the gardens we noticed a peculiar kind of cucumber, very short, and plump in the middle. The ideal of female loveliness prevailing in the heart of the Russian peasant is inseparable from a certain

rotundity of figure; hence to say that a woman is "as plump as a cucumber" is considered a tender and graceful compliment.

One day we saw a string of several light waggons drawn up outside the cottage of the steward, bailiff, and general factotum of the estate. From the waggons alighted men in dusty and travel-stained garments, who engaged in an earnest colloquy with the steward in a language which did not appear to be Russian. It turned out that they were Letts, and they had come as a deputation from their village, several hundred miles distant, with a view to selecting new lands for a settlement. Their proposal was to cultivate some of the waste land belonging to the Count, upon a species of metayer arrangement, by paying him with a portion of the crops as a rental.

Many of the household arrangements at S—— were strange to our English ideas. In each of the living rooms was an Ikon, or holy picture, and all of the Orthodox bowed to it and crossed themselves upon entering the apartment. Upon the announcement of dinner, when the family and guests were assembled in the drawing-room, the lady of the house beckoned to the ladies of the party, and conducted them in a body to the dining-room. After this would follow the host, leading the gentlemen, and the two sexes were arranged on opposite sides of the dinner-table. Before sitting down, however, it is customary to partake of a slight *hors d'œuvre*, served at a side table, such as a morsel of caviare, or of ham, a sandwich, or sardine, accompanied by a glass

of wine or spirits. This custom, which I found flourishing in Russia, still exists almost exactly as the English traveller Coxe describes it, upon the occasion of his dining with Prince Volkonski, at Moscow, in 1778.*

After some days' stay, our host proposed to introduce us to his mother, and our whole party accordingly accompanied him on a thirty miles' drive to the country residence of the Dowager Countess. Our road again lay for the most part through forest tracks, but the Count pointed out that were it winter instead of autumn we should be making a shorter cut—literally, as the crow flies—as all fences, ditches, or similar impediments would be covered over by several feet of snow. On our way we occasionally amused ourselves by stopping the carriages and gathering mushrooms, which abounded on the sides of the tracks through the forests. I soon incurred the mild remonstrances of the Count for neglecting to secure some of what I was informed were the finest and most delicious kinds which grew in my path. As the eulogised specimens were either of a bright orange, or other startling hue, and presented appearances wholly at variance with my previous notions as to the edible varieties, I could only plead ignorance and promise amendment. Our fungoid collection assumed, in fact, such a polychromatic appearance as would have insured its prompt rejection at the hands of the far-famed British "good plain cook." It was, however, upon our arrival duly consigned to the kitchen,

* Coxe's "Travels," vol. i., p. 376.

and we afterwards enjoyed the results at dinner, with some misgivings at the time, but without any evil consequences.

Our cordial reception by our venerable hostess at once placed us at our ease, and we passed a couple of very pleasant days at her house. She passed the summer months at this, her villa retreat at O——, with its pretty gardens sloping down to the river Sitnia. Some friends were invited to meet us upon the day of our arrival, and after an agreeable dinner party, we passed the evening with music, acting charades, and whist. After skirmishing at conversation in various languages, we all with one consent settled down into French—a neutral ground upon which we found our level better than in any other tongue. One or two of the ladies smoked cigarettes, an accomplishment not uncommon amongst the fair sex in Russia. On the morrow we strolled down to the small river which passes through the grounds, and upon the banks of which we collected some remarkable fossils. On the other side of the stream we saw two tumuli, forming part, as we were informed, of a line of such mounds extending for some hundreds of leagues—the monuments of some forgotten race who had penetrated in pre-historic times to these regions across the vast plains of northern Europe. We complimented our hostess upon her charming house and grounds. “Yes,” she said; “it is very nice in the summer, but in the winter, not! For when the ground is covered so deep with snow, and everything is frozen, and the wolves come and howl at the

bottom of the garden, oh! then I prefer my house in St. Petersburg." And the ladies of our party were quite disposed to agree with her. We saw many eagles, but bears are becoming pretty rare, and must be searched for farther north.

Upon our return to S—— our host and hostess arranged to accompany us to St. Petersburg, and the Count, amongst other preparations for his absence, packed up his medical stores, which he was in the habit of dispensing to his peasants. "It is of no use my telling them that I am not a doctor," said he; "they come to me from far and near whenever I am at S——, and insist upon my giving them physic."

A neat, pleasant-looking maid-servant had waited upon the two ladies of my party with a zeal and goodwill which surmounted all linguistic difficulties. She now came to bid us adieu; the ladies were quite sorry to part with her, and she kissed my wife *on the shoulder*, a customary greeting of affectionate respect paid by an inferior to one of a superior class. The greetings which the Count received from the male peasants whom we met upon the roads, or on passing through the villages, were performed by the removal of the head-covering, followed by a profound bow, which culminated in bending the body until the back was as nearly as possible at right angles with the hips.

After spending two or three days together at St. Petersburg, our friends accompanied us to the terminus of the railway by which we were to travel

to Moscow, and we took our leave of them with unfeigned regret, carrying with us a vivid and most grateful impression of our first experiences of Russian hospitality.

CHAPTER III.

A VISIT TO MOSCOW.

Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow.—The Volga—Description of Moscow—The Kremlin—Churches and Public Buildings.—The Russian Patriarchs.—The Red Plain—Rostrum of Ivan the Terrible—Moscow in 1528, in 1778, and in 1881—Manufactures—Connection of the Village Mirs with the large Cities—Moscow the Heart of Russia.

FROM St. Petersburg to Moscow the journey (400 miles) takes about fifteen hours by railway. The line, a very straight one, passes through a country for the most part flat and monotonous, diversified only by its extensive forests. It was formerly a proverb that a squirrel could travel from St. Petersburg to Moscow without alighting on the ground. This is no longer literally true, as great inroads have been made upon the woods for railway sleepers, for ordinary fuel, and for the devouring maws of locomotive and steam-boat furnaces. But these forests are still vast, and as one stretch of one hundred miles of fir-trees is very like another, we decided to make this journey by night.

On arriving at the station, we found many of the departing passengers hurrying along the platform, hugging huge bed-pillows, with which to make them.

selves comfortable in the train. Before entering our carriage, our attention was attracted by the sound of ecclesiastical music ; we followed the sound, and found that it issued from a room fitted up as a chapel beneath the roof of the terminus itself, and abutting upon the platform. In it a religious service was being performed by priests in their sacerdotal vestments, and we learned that it was at the instance of a party of peasants, who desired the blessings of the Church before undertaking a long journey. We were also told that the incident was not at all unusual.

Our carriage this time was a saloon, with sixteen seats in the form of large arm-chairs, which could be pulled out so as to form a series of not uncomfortable couches. Our companions in the carriage were all Russians, and one of them, an amiable-looking and lively old gentleman, made great efforts to engage in conversation with us. But as one member after another of our party tried him successively in English, French, and German, and as he evidently knew nothing but Russ, the results were not abundantly fruitful, although he continued to talk to us for some time with extreme volubility.

During the darkness of the night we crossed the river Volkov, the stream across which Rurik and his followers took up their position in order to intercept the navigation between Novgorod and Lake Ladoga, until Rurik should arrive at a complete understanding with his new subjects ; and in the darkness we skirted the forest district of Volkonsk, the low watershed from which spring the Volga, the Duna, and the

Dnieper. The sources of these three rivers are not twenty-five miles apart ; their outlets are respectively into the Caspian, the Baltic, and the Euxine.

At about six in the morning the lively old gentleman awakens us from our slumbers ; this time he is determined to make himself understood, and as "Volga ! Volga !" forms the burden of his speech, we have no difficulty in comprehending his meaning. Yes, yonder in the distance is the city of Tver, in the old times the capital of one of the many subsidiary principalities of Russia ; and this broad river which we are about to cross, as it shines amidst the morning mists, is the sacred Volga, moving majestically on its course of 2,300 miles, a mighty highway and connecting link between Europe and Asia. Several of our fellow-passengers cross themselves as we pass this stream, which holds so important a place in their national history and legendary lore, and which is to Russians all, and even more than all, that the Rhine is to the Germans.

At length, shortly before mid-day, we arrive at the ancient capital of Russia. Moscow, as a small fortified position, was probably founded in or about the year 1147 by George Dolgorouki, then Prince of Sousdale, afterwards Grand Prince. Its importance, however, commenced under Ivan Kalita, who transferred to it the throne of the Grand Principedom (1328 to 1340), and to him and to his heroic grandson, Dmitri Donskoï, the earliest erections of the Kremlin are attributed.

Our first visit was to this Kremlin, which contains

within its precincts the most ancient and the most interesting of the attractions of the city. The word Kreml, or Kremlin, is not peculiar to Moscow ; it is a generic term, describing a congeries of buildings, usually upon a separately fortified eminence within a city, corresponding to what was in ancient times the Acropolis at Athens and Sparta, the Acro-corinthus at Corinth, or the Capitol at Rome. Other Russian cities, the old Novgorod, Nijni-Novgorod, Kasan, Toula, &c., have also their Kremains, but the Kremlin of Moscow stands pre-eminent in historic importance over all other existing monuments in Russia, and its stones preach eloquent sermons on the painful and laborious efforts by which the national unity, and with it the Russian empire, were also built up, stone by stone, by Ivan Kalita and his successors. Amongst the curiosities to be seen in the Kremlin is a collection of the ancient regalia of various principalities absorbed in succession by the Grand Princes of Moscow, suggestive and typical of that sheaf of princely truncheons which these astute potentates seized one by one, and welded together to form the mighty sceptre of the Tsar of all the Russias.

At present the Kremlin comprises within its walls several palaces, churches, and cathedrals, an arsenal, two monasteries, and other public buildings. The churches are adorned with an untold wealth of precious marbles, jewelled shrines and Ikons, whilst above them all rises the great Belfry Tower of Ivan-Velikoi, 269 feet high, with its grand peal of thirty three bells. Near the base of this tower stands the

largest bell ever founded, the Tsar Kolokol, weighing about 200 tons, and measuring 20 feet 6 inches in height. This monarch bell, cast by order of the Empress Anna, fell from its place in consequence of the burning of the beam from which it was suspended. Through a piece broken out of its side you can enter, as by an archway, into the brazen vaulted chamber of the now silent Kolokol. The Russians are extremely fond of bells, and Moscow is probably more amply provided with them than any other city in the world. Another and still more celebrated bell is the great bell of the Vetché or Council of Novgorod. It used to be sounded in that city to call the citizens to arms, or whenever it was necessary to deliberate upon any danger to the Republic. When Ivan the Great caused this bell to be removed to Moscow, the Novgorodians mourned over the departure of this Palladium of their liberty, and rightly concluded that the independence of their Republic was gone for ever.

Amongst the most interesting of the buildings within the Kremlin are the ancient palace of the early Tsars, the modern splendours of the Senate House, built by Catherine II., and of the new palace erected by the Emperor Nicholas. In the Cathedral of the Archangel, founded by Ivan Kalita, the remains of that prince and of all his successors up to the time of Peter the Great are interred. All the succeeding sovereigns, with the exception of Peter II., are buried at St. Petersburg.

In the Cathedral of the Annunciation, with its floor of costly agate, is a sacred picture of the Virgin,

which took part in Dmitri Donskoi's victorious expedition against the Tartars. The Cathedral of the Assumption is the place of coronation of the Tsars, and in it the Patriarchs were formerly elected. It contains a still more celebrated Ikon of the Virgin than that of the Annunciation. This picture is said to have been painted by St. Luke ; it is held in high veneration, and is enclosed within a screen valued at £25,000. Here also is the ancient palace of the Metropolitans and Patriarchs, of whom no less a number, in succession, than 22 Metropolitans and 11 Patriarchs adorned Moscow by their virtues. In this palace are two large silver cauldrons, in which is prepared the "holy oil" which is used for baptisms. Some centuries ago a vase of mother-of-pearl, said to contain some of the oil made use of by Mary Magdalene in anointing our Saviour, was presented by a Greek Emperor to the Russian Metropolitan. A small portion of the oil contained in this vase is mixed in the cauldron with the oil which is being prepared for consecration. The operation is performed at intervals by an Archbishop, who himself lights the fire under the cauldron. The oil, so prepared, is stored in silver vessels, and is supplied as required to the parish priests in all parts of Russia ; oil being mixed with the water with which infants are baptised.

The reverence paid to pictures of the Virgin and of saints is a marked feature of the observances of the Greek Church in Russia. The prohibition against graven images is taken literally ; but holy pictures in Russia receive quite as much veneration as do statues

in Roman Catholic countries. Some of these pictures are very ancient, and possess but little beauty ; the face is frequently quite black, either from age or from a peculiarity of the pigment, whilst the accessory parts representing the crown or nimbus, parts of the dress, &c., are frequently in high relief in embossed precious metals and studded with jewels.

The rank of Patriarch is now abolished in Russia, and the history of this sacred office is another illustration of the gradual accumulation of power in the hands of the Tsars. When Christianity was established as the religion of the state, by Vladimir I., in A.D. 989, the Russian Primates or Metropolitans (whose seat was first established at Kieff, and was afterwards removed to Vladimir, and later to Moscow) were subjected to the supremacy of the Patriarchs of Constantinople. In 1588, Boris Godounoff, then the all-powerful Minister of the Tsar Feodor, took advantage of the visit to Moscow of the Patriarch Jeremias, of Constantinople, and succeeded with extreme difficulty in inducing that venerable prelate to consecrate a Patriarch of Moscow in the person of the Metropolitan, Job. Thenceforth the Russian Church became practically independent of the other Greek Churches. The Patriarchs of Moscow by degrees obtained considerable political influence ; too much so to suit the views of Peter the Great, who, upon the death of the Patriarch Adrian, in 1700, omitted to name a successor. The ecclesiastical interregnum lasted for 21 years, when the Patriarchate was formally abolished and replaced by the "Holy

Synod," which from that time took in hand the control and regulation of the Russian Established Church. Peter was fortunate enough to obtain from the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Alexandria, in council assembled, a recognition of this new order of things, and of the right of the Russian Sovereign to a complete "protectorate" over the National Church. The members of the Holy Synod, Archbishops, Bishops, and Archimandrites, with their lay assessors, the Minister of Public Instruction, Chancellors, Directors, &c., are all nominated by the Emperor. The supremacy of the Tsar over the Russian Church has thus been formally established without any breach of communion with the Orthodox Greek Church.

The Kremlin stands upon high ground in the centre of the city. It is surrounded by walls of great height and thickness, with many towers and five gates. In one of these gateways, called the Gate of the Redeemer, is a picture of our Saviour, which is held in such high veneration that every man is expected to uncover his head in passing under it. If a stranger omits this ceremony, the nearest by-stander will most probably knock off his hat and rebuke him for his lack of reverence. Looking down from the terrace, on one side is seen the Krasnaya Ploščad, or Red Plain, formerly covered with houses, but now a large open space. Here is the round stone platform from which Ivan the Terrible was said to have been in the habit of haranguing the populace.

Near to it is the wonderful Church of St. Basil, erected by the orders of the same redoubtable monarch.

It is a monument of barbaric taste and magnificence, and has eleven chapels and nine domes. The domes are of various colours externally, and are suggestive of a collection of melons or pumpkins. Tradition says that Ivan was so enchanted with this church after its completion that he caused its architect to have his eyes put out, in order that he might not be able to erect for any other prince a similar triumph of art.

Close by is a monument in bronze, erected in 1818, to the memory of the two patriot leaders, Prince Dmitri Pojarsky and Kozma Minine the Butcher, who delivered their country from the Polish invaders after the evil days of the false Dinitrii. The sword of Pojarsky is preserved as a relic in the Monastery of Solovetski in the White Sea.

At a little distance stands the highly ornamented gateway of the Kitai-Gorod, another section of the town enclosed by a separate wall, and beyond and around you look down upon the countless roofs, domes, and towers of the great city. The roofs are mostly painted green, the domes of the numerous churches either green or yellow, some of them being gilded, and the whole aspect of the place from our point of view, taken in conjunction with the Byzantine architecture of the older buildings which surround us, is decidedly that of an Oriental city. Through it winds the river Moskva, from which it takes its name. The Moskva is a tributary of the Oka, which joins the Volga at Nijni-Novgorod, so that the numerous manufacturing factories of Moscow have the advantage of water-carriage for their goods to the principal towns of the

empire, from Petersburg to Astrachan, and from thence to the countries bordering on the Caspian.

The Kremlin has escaped most wonderfully from the numerous conflagrations which have devastated Moscow. From the date of 1176, when the city was burnt during the war with the Prince of Riazan, and inclusive of three several burnings inflicted upon it by the Tartars, it counts in its annals no less than ten of these fiery destructions. After the last great fire, during the occupation of Napoleon, the city was rapidly reconstructed, and principally upon the old and tortuous lines of streets.

Whilst writing this description, I am comparing three maps of Moscow; the first is a copy of a rude plan drawn up by the Baron of Herberstein, ambassador from the Emperor Maximilian to the Court of Vasillii the Brave, in 1528. The walls of the Kremlin and some of its principal buildings can be recognised, but after making allowances for the inaccuracies of the drawing, the town appears to have been of very moderate dimensions. The next is a map of the city published in Coxe's "*Travels*,"* depicting Moscow as it appeared when he visited it in 1778, during the reign of Catherine II., and the last is a map of its present condition. On comparing the last two maps, one is struck by their remarkable similarity as regards the main lines of the city. Coxe describes it as "certainly the largest town in Europe," and puts its circumference within the ramparts at 26 miles. The population, however, after a careful sifting of evidence, he states

* Coxe's "*Travels*," vol. i., p. 351.

at 250,000 souls within the ramparts, and 50,000 in the adjacent villages. According to the "Statesman's Year Book of Facts," the population in 1871 was 611,970.

In and around Moscow manufacturing industry has largely increased of late years, particularly in cotton and woollen weaving, spinning, and dyeing. In the neighbouring provinces considerable iron-works and other important factories have sprung into existence. These manufactures are fostered by the highly protective tariff, which is continually increasing in stringency, and more and more completely shutting out foreign goods from the Russian markets.

As regards the continued extensions of territory in Asia, it is not unnatural that they should be viewed with approbation in manufacturing towns, when it is seen that each extension of the boundary line encloses a new series of customers, who are at once made consumers of Russian goods. All the best routes for trade communication with Central Asia have been falling one by one into the hands of Russia; and her command of the Caspian so facilitates her traffic with Persia that her trade in cotton and other goods is now penetrating further and further into the Persian markets, replacing English goods which had hitherto been sold there.

Most of the factory hands are still connected with the rural Mirs, and leave their families in the villages for months at a time, the manufacturer often building lodgings for them near his works. The peasant, although enfranchised from the control of the seigneur,

is still attached to the soil, and cannot leave his village without the consent of the community. Whether married or single, and whilst working in the towns, he still has to pay his quota to the village dues and taxes; and he is liable to be recalled at any time if the village elders consider that any infirm members of his family require his aid or sustenance, or if they believe that the family patch of land is not properly cultivated. It is hinted that thriving young artizans have sometimes to submit to black-mail, under threats of recall, in order to furnish the bibulous patriarchs of the village with the means for a drinking-bout. It is possible for the peasant to sever his connection with the Mir altogether, but to do so he must satisfy a number of conditions of so rigorous a nature as to be in many cases impracticable.* Ordinarily, the married artizan leaves his wife and children to till the land as best they can, returning to them at harvest time, or at other intervals. By so doing he retains his property in the soil. But it is doubtful whether this divided allegiance between the town and the factory on the one hand, and the Mir and the family on the other, will for any length of time stand the strain of the very obvious inconveniences of the double position.

Before leaving Moscow, let us look down upon it once more—say from the height of Sparrow Hill, from which eminence Napoleon I. took his first view of the city which was so fatal to his fortunes. The outward aspect of the city is as strikingly typical of its social and political characteristics as is St. Peters-

* W. Hepworth Dixon's "Free Russia," vol. ii., p. 167,

burgh on an entirely different model. Intensely Russian, clinging to the old ways, and loth to change them, with a memory of many fiery martyrdoms which it has undergone at the hands of the foes of Holy Russia, and with a proud consciousness of its own capacity for patriotic self-sacrifice, it has risen again and again from its ashes, each time endowed with a stronger vitality. And it still clusters round that ancient Kremlin, which contains the ashes and memorials of those princes who, in spite of the anarchy and barbarism which surrounded them, did nevertheless succeed in uniting the Russians into a nation; that venerated Kremlin, filled with the relics of the saints and the shrines of that "Orthodox" faith under whose ritual the true Muscovites still so fervently worship the God of their fathers.

Moscow is Slavophil, and a long series of traditions identifies its sympathies with every effort on the part of a Slavonic population to throw off the yoke of the Mussulman. It has itself in the past felt the heavy weight of that yoke, and it will never cease to strive to assist all kindred communities in throwing it off. So argues "O. K.,"* and her arguments are in this instance extremely weighty. If we wish to understand Russian politics, we may inquire what the Government at St. Petersburg is about to do; but we must also enquire, "What is the opinion at Moscow?" St. Petersburg may for the time represent the governing head, but at Moscow beats the great heart of the nation.

* "O. K.," "Russia and England," chap. ii., p. 9.

CHAPTER IV.

VISITS TO NIJNI-NOVGOROD AND WARSAW—NOTES ON
OTHER RUSSIAN CITIES.

Journey to Nijni-Novgorod—Origin of the Great Fair—The Volga and its Navigable Communications—Description of the Fair—Journey from Moscow to Warsaw—Description of Warsaw—Palace of John Sobieski—The Polish Diets—Notes upon other Cities of the Empire.

AFTER staying for some time at Moscow, we determined to visit the great fair of Nijni-Novgorod, at which place we arrived at about nine o'clock one morning, after a railway journey of thirteen hours.

Founded in 1221 by the Grand Prince George Vsevolodovitch (he who was afterwards killed in battle by the Tartars under the walls of Vladimir), the town of Nijni, or Lower, Novgorod did not, until after many ages, acquire that importance which its admirable position, at the confluence of the rivers Volga and Oka, has at length obtained for it.

But a great annual fair had been held at various places on the banks of the Volga for centuries. It had its origin, doubtless, in connection with the trading stations which the energetic citizens of Novgorod the Great had established upon the shores of the Kama, the Viatka, and the Volga. During the time of the Tartars, who did not discourage the commerce of the Novgorodian Republic, this fair was established at Kasan, then the capital of the

Khanate of that name. In 1648 the fair was removed to Makarieff, also on the Volga, about fifty miles from Nijni-Novgorod. In 1816 a great fire occurred at Makarieff, destroying all the buildings used for the fair, and causing a great destruction of merchandise. The Emperor Alexander I. thereupon caused the fair to be removed to Nijni-Novgorod, and that city at once attained a high degree of commercial importance, which from year to year has steadily increased.

The annual amount of business at the time of the first establishment of the fair at Nijni-Novgorod was estimated at between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000 sterling; it is at present valued at from £20,000,000 to £25,000,000. It is somewhat difficult, however, to estimate the full importance of the transactions at this great fair, as many contracts and bargains are entered into which do not involve the immediate handing over of the merchandise.

In the old times, the merchant travelled with his goods, and made bargains personally with his customers, seeing the colour of their money, or receiving other goods in barter, before he parted with the merchandise. The enormous bulk of goods which are actually unloaded and reloaded at Nijni-Novgorod attests to the continued prevalence in Russia of the old system of trading.

A glance at the map will show a natural cause for so great a traffic. The position of Nijni-Novgorod not only ensures to it the commerce of the districts watered by the Volga, the Oka, and the Kama; it

also obtains through the tributaries and canals of these great rivers a direct water-borne traffic with the White Sea, the Baltic, the Caspian, and the Black Sea. An adventurous Rob Roy could "paddle his own canoe" from the mouth of the Elbe to the Arctic Ocean, the Caspian, or the Euxine, by passing through the inland navigable waters of Russia. The extension of a system of water-carriage through the Caspian into the heart of Central Asia is already being studied in a practical manner. In ancient times, the Sir Daria (Sihun, or Jaxartes), and the Amu Daria (Jihoon, or Oxus), which at present lose themselves in the Sea of Aral, were navigable streams flowing into the Caspian.* Were these streams restored to their original course, the result would be that merchandise could be carried in barges from St. Petersburg or Nijni-Novgorod direct to Tashkend, Khokand, Khiva, Bokhara, or the frontiers of Afghanistan.

The town of Nijni-Novgorod itself possesses few objects of interest. It has a Kremlin, a few churches, and a memorial obelisk raised to the memory of Minine and Pojarsky. Standing as it does upon a slight eminence, one can from the Kremlin obtain a *coup d'œil* of the great fair. Below, upon a flat, marshy peninsula between the Volga and the Oka, are the head-quarters of the fair; the ground is covered with low-roofed warehouses, shops, and booths, in stone, brick, and wood. These erections also cover

* Strabo, Book XI. Pliny the Elder, Book VI. See also an excellent article in the *Globe* newspaper, 5th Dec., 1878.

an island in the Oka, and extend for miles, with more or less frequency, down the banks of the two rivers. During the two months of the fair, the throng of merchants, porters, boatmen, and traffickers of all kinds is enormous, from all parts of Russia and from all parts of Asia. One part of the fair is called the "Chinese Quarter;" but of late years the influx of Chinese merchants has dwindled away, as, owing to clipper vessels, steamers, and the Suez Canal, tea can be brought half round the world, through the Baltic ports, and by river or railroad, cheaper than by the overland route from China. The varied costumes of diverse Oriental and European races, and the variety of languages heard amidst the din of bargaining during the busy time of the fair, produce a powerful impression upon the stranger. The two rivers are covered with innumerable boats, of many shapes and various rigs, full of merchandise from the vast variety of provinces and countries whose waterways converge towards this great entrepôt of commerce.

When the fair is over, most of the warehouses are closed, the motley crowd of merchants disappear, and the place resumes the aspect of a deserted city.

Upon our return to Moscow, and after some further rambles in that most interesting of all Russian cities, we made our arrangements for visiting Warsaw. A railway journey more tedious than either of the preceding ones, and occupying nearly forty hours (two long days and one night), brought us to Warsaw. The monotony of this journey was not broken by any

incident worth recording. Our route at about seventy miles from Moscow passed across the plains of Borodino, and there, upon an eminence, we caught a glimpse of the mausoleum erected by the Russians to commemorate their great battle with Napoleon. In the early grey of the next morning we crossed the river Beresina, not far from the spot where the Russians inflicted final and crushing defeat upon Napoleon's army retreating from Moscow. At 250 miles from Moscow, we crossed the Dnieper, and passed through Smolensk, the town so often in dispute between the Russians and the Poles, and also the scene of fierce conflicts during Napoleon's advance to Moscow. We passed through Lithuania, through Minsk, the capital of the province of the same name, and at length we arrived at Warsaw, late at night, and worn out with the fatigue of our journey.

Warsaw, as the capital of the unfortunate dismembered kingdom of Poland, may well be regarded with pathetic interest in tribute to its past miseries, and its heroic struggles for independence. But it would be vain to pretend that the *outward* aspect of Warsaw recalls any traces of its former misfortunes. On the contrary, it struck me as being much gayer and livelier than the Russian towns. That Warsaw and the surrounding districts are progressing in *material* prosperity is evidenced by the increase of the population, the extension of building operations, and the growth of manufactures.

A marked feature of contrast to the towns in Russia is the fact that the signs and announcements

on the shops and houses, the names of streets, &c., are in the Latin characters. This was a refreshing change to us after having been so long puzzling over those bastard Greek letters of which the Russian alphabet is composed, some of the most prominent of which appear at first sight like members of the alphabet drunk on parade, and presenting the wrong side foremost.

Another point of contrast is in the churches, and the ritual celebrated within them. The Poles are, for the most part, staunch Roman Catholics, and the adherents of the Greek Church in Warsaw are almost entirely confined to the Russian officials.

Warsaw is, upon the whole, a handsome city, possessing many fine public buildings and churches, besides numerous palaces of the ancient kings and of the modern nobility, a statue in honour of King John Sobieski, and one to Copernicus, the astronomer, who was born here. It was refreshing to behold once more a real Gothic cathedral, that of St. John, a thirteenth-century building of great beauty.

The river Vistula flows through Warsaw in a broad, swift stream on its way to the ports of Dantzic and Königsburgh. Standing on the bridge, we saw a quantity of timber rafts floating down to the sea, with grain stowed upon them, destined probably to pass eventually into the hands of English consumers. The Vistula is in navigable connection with the vast system of water-courses alluded to at page 52.

We visited Villanow, the suburban palace formerly occupied by the Hero King John Sobieski, the

champion of Christendom, who, in 1683 saved Austria and Europe from the Turks under the walls of Vienna. With the life of this patriotic monarch and great general, the glories of Poland came to an end. Several of the rooms filled with the furniture and personal effects of Sobieski are still preserved in the same condition as when he was alive. The room in which, in the year 1696, he breathed his last has been turned into a chapel. I may be pardoned for reminding my readers that a grand-daughter of the hero, the Princess Clementina Sobieski, married the elder Pretender to the English throne, and became the mother of "bonnie Prince Charlie."

In all the old portraits of kings and nobles which hang on the walls of the public buildings, the heads appear shaven, except for a patch upon the top. Less than 100 years ago, this was the universal custom in Poland.*

What is there to be seen at Warsaw, most typical of the fate of unfortunate Poland? There are many spots amongst the broad squares of the city and in the country surrounding it which will be for ever memorable for the heroic self-sacrifice of brave men who have there made their last stand against overwhelming odds, and given up their lives for their country in patriotic devotion. But, alas! the most typical of all is the great plain of Vola, the meeting-place of the Polish Diets. Thither came, in all the pomp and circumstance of chivalry, that factious nobility who left slavery in the homestead and brought

* Coxe's "Travels," vol. i., p. 194.

licence to the city, whom no disaster could teach wisdom, until disaster was irretrievable and wisdom was unavailing, until the independence of Poland had become a dream of the past. It was by the untameable turbulence, the selfish factiousness, and the frequent venality of the Diets that the complete overthrow of this once powerful military nation was rendered possible.

With the termination of our visit to Warsaw, my account of our Russian journey draws to a close. Seven hours more railway travelling conveyed us from Warsaw to the frontier, where, at a place called Granica, not far from Cracow, we quitted the dominions of the Tsar of all the Russias for those of His Imperial Royal and Apostolic Majesty of Austria and Hungary.

The following brief references to some of the cities mentioned hereafter in the historical part of this work may be useful to the reader :—

Novgorod “the Great;” on the river Volkov, near Lake Ilmen. There is also Nijni Novgorod (already described); Novgorod Sierveskoi, in the government of Tchernigov, and Novgrad near Minsk, on the Prussian frontier.

Kieff, an ancient capital of Russia, on the Dnieper
Vladimir, also formerly a capital, on the river Kliazma.

Kazan, the “Tartar City,” on the river Kazanka, about four miles from its confluence with the Volga.

Astrakhan, on the Caspian, at the mouth of the Volga.

Archangel, on the White Sea, closed by ice during seven months of the year.

Narva, *Revel* and *Riga*, important sea-ports on the Baltic coast, especially *Riga*.

Smolensk, upon the Dnieper, 250 miles from Moscow.

Odessa, on the Black Sea, formerly the seat of a Greek colony, called *Odessus*.

Tobolsk, in Siberia, at the confluence of the Irtysh and the Tobol, 1,976 miles from St. Petersburg.

Tomsk, in Siberia, on the river Tom, 2,809 miles east of St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER V.

EARLY RUSSIAN HISTORY.

From the Foundation of Novgorod to the Death of Vladimir I. :
A.D. 592-1015—Pre-historic Glimpses—Herodotus and the Scythians—Antiquity of the Slavonic Commercial Communities—Novgorod—Smolensk—Kieff—Baian, Khan of the Avars—The Emperor Maurice and the Ambassadors from Novgorod—The early Prosperity of Novgorod—Novgorod invites Rurik—His Reign—Oskold and Dire—Oleg—Igor—Olga—Sviatoslaw—Iaropolk—Vladimir I.—Russia Converted to Christianity—Establishment of the System of “Appanages”—Its disastrous consequences.

DURING the early ages of the historic period, even legend is supposed to have been silent with respect to the country now called Russia, if we except certain traditions respecting those of the Scythian tribes who inhabited the shores of the Euxine. I am, however,

constrained to surmise that some of the legends respecting the voyages of Jason and of Odysseus may perchance have been influenced by distorted accounts of real voyages up the courses of the great Scythian rivers, and I hope to take some future opportunity of enlarging upon this idea. Herodotus minutely describes the Scythian nations of his time. They have since disappeared from history, and it has not been satisfactorily proved that the Slavs are descended from them.

Herodotus also discourses upon the great rivers which flow into the Euxine, of the Borysthenes, and the important commerce of which it was in his time the highway.* And when the curtain of authentic history lifts for the first time, we find high up amongst the regions of the Hyperboreans, seated near the springs of the great Scythian rivers, an organised commercial Republic, already flourishing, and of ancient and unrecorded origin.

Time, with his ceaseless revolutions, had changed again and again the fortunes of the regions and peoples mentioned by Herodotus. The empire of Alexander had swallowed up the empire of Cyrus and Darius. The Roman arms had subverted the kingdoms founded by the successors of Alexander. The tribes of Scythia had been driven back by fresh hordes from the central and eastern parts of Asia, and as successive waves of barbarians followed, tide by tide, the bulwarks of the Roman empire had, in their turn, been swept away.

* "Melpomene," 45, 53.

But it is asserted by Russian historians that the Slavonic commercial communities rising in the north-western corner of Europe grew and expanded unchecked by these revolutions, and that the origin of their institutions was isolated and autochthonic. They had not been influenced by Greek manners or culture, nor had the tramp of the Roman legions ever sounded amidst the vast forests which environed them. The Goths; the Huns, the Alans, the Bulgars, and the Avars had swept on their destructive courses through the plains central and eastern of the present Russia, but they had left untouched, amidst the forests and marshes of Volkonsk, the cradle of the Russian national existence, in which a new type of civilisation was slowly and securely being nursed. This distinctive existence is in its origin intimately connected with the commercial Republic of Novgorod the Great. Let us glance at the earliest indications respecting this Republic and its allies, the early agents and intermediaries of the commerce between the Baltic and the Black Sea.

It is impossible to fix with certainty the date of the foundation of the city of Novgorod. We know that Kieff was founded on the banks of the Dnieper in the year A.D. 430, eighteen years before the first Saxon invasion of Britain, and forty-six years before Odoacer dethroned the last Roman Emperor of the West, in the person of the feeble Romulus Augustus. Already at that date, both Novgorod and Smolensk were flourishing cities. In 493 Theodoric proclaimed himself King of Italy, and it is recorded that the *Æstii*, Esthonians or Livonians, the near neighbours

of the Novgorodians, brought presents of amber to Theodoric at Rome.

But it was about 100 years later, in 592 A.D., that the incident occurred which has been claimed by Russian historians as positively identified with the community of Novgorod. At that time the Emperor Maurice was seated upon the throne of Constantine, as ruler of all that remained of what was still called the Roman empire. The Lombards had firmly established their kingdom in Italy. The allies of the Lombards, the Avars, had founded a powerful principality upon the ruins of the Roman empire in central and eastern Europe. Baian, the great Chagan or Khan of the Avars, had ravaged the provinces of the empire between the Adriatic and the Euxine, laid siege to Philippopolis and Adrianople, and insulted Constantinople itself. With his army marched many subject Slavonian tribes; and during this century the Slavs, as an organised force, though in a subordinate capacity, appear for the first time as enemies under the walls of the eastern city of the Cæsars.

Maurice marched out against his formidable enemy, and in the neighbourhood of Heraclea, it is reported by Theophylact, that he met with three men of gigantic stature, who, upon being questioned, replied in the Slavonic tongue that they were ambassadors from a remote nation, dwelling near the shores of the Western Ocean, and that they were sent by their chiefs to visit the formidable Baian, and to excuse themselves from sending a contingent to his

armies. They carried no arms, but each had a cithara (a kind of guitar) suspended from his neck, and they explained that their nation were entirely strangers to wars, tumults, and seditions, and that they occupied themselves in peaceful intercourse as intermediaries between the various peoples. Baian had put them in prison for a time, in anger at the reply which they brought to him. This incident, as narrated by Theophylact, is referred to in the notes to Gibbon's great work; it is related at length by Amédée Thierry, and is cited with much emphasis by Nicholas de Gerebtzoff.* This last writer, a learned Russian, to whom I am indebted for many details respecting the early history of Russia, and whose work I earnestly recommend to students, claims these strangers as envoys from the Novgorodian nation. He mentions that the inhabitants of Novgorod always called the Baltic the "Western Sea;" and he cites other early historians in confirmation of his point that the Slavenes of the north were of a mild and peaceful disposition as contrasted with the Slavs of more southern and eastern districts, and that they were addicted to commerce.

Their nation must certainly have been beyond the grasp of Baian, or their condition could neither have been peaceable nor prosperous. The great Khan of

* Theophylactus Simocatta, of Locri, "*Historiæ Rerum à Mauritio gestarum.*" Gibbon, "*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,*" Bohn's edition, 1854, chap. xlv., p. 156. Amédée Thierry, "*Histoire d'Attila et de ses Successeurs,*" 2^e partie, chap. i. Gerebtzoff, "*Histoire de la Civilisation en Russie,*" vol. i., p. 46.

the Avars ruled an empire extending over the greatest part of central Europe, and the Slavonic populations under his sway, including those of what is now southern Russia, were reduced to a miserable state of the most abject and cruel servitude. During the reign of Heraclius, the Avars, with their tributary Slavs, led by the successor of Baian, again appear under the walls of Constantinople. Each time the southern Slavs are mentioned in the history of this period, they are spoken of as a subject race, treated by their masters, the Avars, with the most abominable cruelty.* And it was only towards the end of the seventh century that they succeeded in obtaining their freedom.

Meantime the Novgorodians were increasing in importance. Nor is this a matter for wonder, seeing the advantageous position which their city possessed in commanding what was in those days the safest and the easiest trade route between Europe and Asia. Even in our own days of roads and railways, commerce always seeks its best and cheapest routes by water. How much more must this have been the case when there were no roads in Europe, with the exception of the few military highways bequeathed by the Romans. And pitiable indeed must have been the condition of the merchant who, travelling with his goods, and surmounting all the difficulties of journeys through roadless countries, had also to incur the dangers of pillage and massacre, inseparable from the

Amédée Thierry, "Histoire des Successeurs d'Attila," 2^e partie, chap. i., chap. iv.

continual feuds and warfare of the semi-barbarous peoples of the Europe of those times.

But if water transport was the safest and the cheapest, yet the seas had their special perils also from predatory rovers. "There be land-rats and water-rats." The mariner's compass, although in all probability known to the Chinese some ages earlier, was not known in Europe until the latter end of the twelfth century. Ships were therefore compelled to more or less timid and tortuous coasting courses, and the hospitality of many of the ports of refuge was dubious, and open to suspicion as to exactions or confiscation. The seas swarmed with pirates, and the profession of the Vikings was considered honourable and noble. During such times, the great rivers of Russia must have possessed special advantages as commercial routes between the west and the east.

In the year 862 a great event occurred at Novgorod.* The city had by this time arrived at a condition of great prosperity, and was governed by its own magistrates and popular assemblies, according to regular laws and customs. It was closely allied to the cities of Kieff and Smolensk, forming with them a confraternity for trade and mutual protection. But this flourishing Republic was torn by factions, and it was seized by a craving for a prince to reign over it. One of its chief magistrates, Gostomysl, who appears to have had great influence over the citizens, finding the

* See the "Chronicles of Nestor," of which there is a good translation into French by Louis Paris; Heideloff et Campé, Paris, 1834. Also see Gerebtzoff, vol. i., pp. 42, 43, 97.

term of his life approaching, and dreading great dangers to the Republic from internal dissensions, advised the people to offer the princely power over them to Rurik, a Norse or Varangian chieftain. And the people cried, "Let him come and govern us *according to our laws*." A deputation was sent to Rurik, and their message was as follows:—"Our country is rich and immense, but order is not established amongst us. Come and reign over us."

Such an appeal to any ambitious chieftain with a horde of warlike followers at his back could have but one result. Rurik, with his tribe, or army, swooped down upon the Novgorod territory, and for good and for evil, from that day to the present, the fortunes of Russia have been indissolubly connected with those of the house of Rurik.

With the sudden apparition of this prominent personage commences the political history of Russia; yet nothing positive is known as to his origin. Was he the head of a tribe, or was he merely a successful Viking, a chieftain who by his prowess and his abilities had attracted a numerous and hardy band of followers? In the notes of Gibbon, chap. lv.,* will be found a theory that Rurik had at one time attempted to establish himself in England. In 851 an expedition of Vikings sailed up the Thames in 350 vessels, and pillaged London and Canterbury, but they were finally defeated with great slaughter at the battle of Okely, by King Ethelwolf. Gibbon's editor cites various authorities in order to identify the leader of these invaders with Rurik,

* Gibbon's "Roman Empire," Bohn, 1855, chap. lv., p 245.

the founder of the Russian monarchy ; but the question who or what he was before he marched to Novgorod will probably remain for ever one of the unsolved mysteries of the past. The doings of Rurik and his race since that eventful period form the most salient features of a thousand years of Russian history.

An interesting discovery was made in 1880, when at Gokstad Sandefjord, on the coast of Norway, a mound near the shore was opened and found to contain a complete Viking ship in good preservation. This ship had been dragged to land and turned into a sarcophagus for some honoured chieftain who had been inhumed therein, and a mound of clay was then raised over ship and hero. The lines and workmanship of this vessel would do honour to the efforts of the best ship-builder of the present day. Yet it is a vessel of the time of Rurik, and it might perchance have carried that chieftain himself.*

The ascendancy of Rurik was not established without a prolonged struggle, as we hear that before entering Novgorod he placed his troops in such a position as to cut off the commercial communications of the city with Lake Ladoga. We also hear of an insurrection headed by a chief called Vandimè, who was slain by the hand of Rurik himself ; and that Rurik's two brothers, Sinaff and Trouvor, were according to all probability slain in similar tumults. Possibly the invitation was not unanimous, and there might have been factions in the city for and against Rurik.

* See article in "Good Words," Nov. 1881, "The Viking Ship," by J. Harris Stone.

Probably also the people imagined that they were to acquire a mere military officer subordinate to their laws, a sort of Warden of the Marches, who would protect and extend the boundaries of the republic without interfering with its internal government. Rurik, on his side, had entirely different views of princely prerogative, and was determined to introduce a kind of feudal system. He sent his two lieutenants, Oskold and Dire, to occupy the town of Kieff; and he finally succeeded in firmly establishing his power. His tribe, or army, appear to have become completely amalgamated, in the course of a generation or two, with the mass of the people. This tribe was called Ross, or Russ. Gerebtzoff says that the Norman Variagues, or Varangians, of the eastern part of the Baltic, were called "Variaguo Rousses." From this tribe it is supposed that the whole people took the name of Russ, although a variety of other hypotheses more or less fanciful have been started as to the origin of the appellation.

During the lifetime of Rurik, his lieutenants at Kieff, Oskold and Dire, led an expedition against Constantinople. It would seem to have been undertaken without his concurrence. Two hundred vessels conveyed these hardy warriors and their army across the Black Sea; but the adventure was unsuccessful, and the greater part of the vessels were destroyed by a tempest, which was said to have been miraculous, probably for the reason that the invaders were pagans, attacking the Christian Emperor Michael. Archbishop Joakhim affirms that Oskold and Dire had an interview

with the Emperor, and that after their return to Kieff, they embraced Christianity; but no mention of this is made by Nestor, the historian and monk of that city.

Rurik died in 879. His two brothers were already dead without issue, and he left a son called Igor, a child of four years old, whom he confided to the charge of his brother-in-law Oleg, who appears to have acted as regent. At all events Oleg ruled during the whole of his lifetime without any opposition on the part of Igor.

Oleg took possession of Smolensk and Kieff, seizing Oskold and Dire, the old companions in arms of Rurik, and putting them to death. The reason assigned for this act was that the two chieftains, "not being born of princely rank, had assumed to themselves the right of reigning, and that he, Oleg, was prince, and with him Igor, the son of Rurik." After taking Kieff, Oleg removed to it the seat of government, probably finding it a more convenient capital than the turbulent and unruly Novgorod.

Having settled the domestic affairs of the principality, Oleg appears to have thought that the proper thing to do was to attack Constantinople. Accordingly he raised an army, of Varangians and Slavs, numbering 80,000, and in the year 907 appeared under the walls of Byzantium. The Emperors Leo and Alexander were glad to purchase peace at the price of a considerable sum in gold, and a treaty was signed which was extremely favourable to the commercial interests of Novgorod. Oleg, in token of triumph, nailed to the

Galatz Gate of Constantinople the shield of the young Prince Igor, with its blazon of a mounted warrior.

Oleg died in 913, and Igor assumed the reins of government. In 941, and again in 944, Igor made war upon the Greek empire. During his first expedition he ravaged Nicomedia, but was unsuccessful in the Bosphorus, where many of his galleys were destroyed by the Greek fire. In his second campaign the Greeks had recourse to golden weapons. A new treaty, and a fresh sacrifice of treasure attested to the feebleness of the Greek empire and the vigour of the rising Russian nationality. In the year 945 Igor was slain in a campaign against the revolted tribe of the Drevliens, leaving an infant son called Sviatoslaw, whose mother, Olga, assumed the regency.

This remarkable princess, one of the many "strong-minded" women who have so prominently figured in Russian history, was said to have been descended from that Gostomysl who had invited Rurik to Novgorod, and appears to have been a beautiful and accomplished woman. Her first thought was to avenge the death of her husband, Igor. Attacking the Drevliens in their chief city, Korostene, and finding the siege prolonged and difficult, she had recourse to an ingenious stratagem. Professing to be weary of her undertaking, she announced to the besieged her willingness to withdraw her army if they would acknowledge their allegiance by sending three pigeons and three sparrows for every roof in the town. The inhabitants were delighted to remove so formidable a danger upon terms so easy, and they speedily collected the feathered tribute from the

thatched roofs of their houses, and forwarded them to the princess. But, at the dead of night, Olga having caused tow to be attached to the tails of the birds, set fire to the tow, and let them loose. Home flew the frightened birds to their accustomed nests; a general conflagration ensued, and during the confusion Olga stormed the city, and exterminated a considerable portion of the inhabitants.

Olga ruled over her son's dominions with strength and ability. A turbulent movement on the part of the ever-restless Novgorodians was repressed by her in person. In the year 975 she undertook a journey to Constantinople, having been induced by Greek missionaries to listen to their teachings of the Christian faith. She was received with great splendour and ceremonial by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and was admitted into the Orthodox Church, the Emperor himself becoming sponsor at the baptism of this Hyperborean amazon.* Upon her return to Russia, she yielded the government into the hands of her son, Sviatoslaw, and travelled over the length and breadth of the land, endeavouring to propagate the principles of her newly-adopted religion. Her success during her lifetime was but scanty, and her son stoutly refused to embrace Christianity. Nevertheless, her influence prepared the minds of the people to listen to the principles of the new faith, whilst her visit to Constantinople increased the social intercourse between the Russians and the Greeks. Alliances by marriage

* Gerebtzoff, vol. i., p. 57. Gibbon, chap. lv. "Chronicles of Nestor."

became more frequent between the two nations, and in most cases the heathen partner would have to embrace Christianity.

After the death of Olga, Sviatoslaw became a persecutor of the Christians. A valiant and hardy prince, he lived the life of a barbarian, and passed the whole of his reign in war, principally with the Greek empire, although his first campaigns in Bulgaria were undertaken at the instigation of the Emperor Nicephorus. Sviatoslaw was at first successful, but after defeating the Bulgarian king, he prepared to keep possession of all the territory up to the Balkan Mountains. Hereupon the allies quarrelled; the Russians advanced to Adrianople and threatened Constantinople. Sviatoslaw was, however, defeated by the successor of Nicephorus, John Zimisce, who finally drove the Russian prince to Drista (the modern Silistria), on the banks of the Danube, where he surrounded his army and forced him to capitulate. Sviatoslaw was allowed to retire down the Danube, from whence he sailed to the Dnieper, but on his march up the course of that river he was attacked and slain by the savage tribe of the Petchenègans, in the year 973.*

A recent writer, Rambaud, calls attention to the narrative of "Leo, the Deacon," as to the interview between the pagan Russian and the Christian Emperor on the banks of the Danube. Zimisce, on horseback, awaits a bark in which one of the rowers is a strongly-built man, large-chested but of middle height, with blue eyes and flattish nose, a light beard and long

* Gibbon, chap. lv., Nestor, "Leo, the Deacon."

moustaches, the head shaved, with the exception of a tuft of hair. From one of his ears hangs a ring of gold adorned with two pearls and a ruby. The sturdy rower is Sviatoslaw. After Sviatoslaw is slain by the Petchenègans, his skull is used as a drinking cup by their chieftain, Konria. A striking portrait of the manners of pagan Russia !

It is certain that Sviatoslaw intended to annex all the country up to the Balkan Mountains, and to remove his capital to the vicinity of the Danube, and that he nearly succeeded in accomplishing his ambitious projects. The fact that the countries between the Adriatic and the Euxine were thickly planted with tribes of Slavonic race and tongues will render it less difficult to grasp the importance of this turning-point of history. Had it not been for this transient revival of the energies of the Greek empire under John Zimisce, aided by his politic alliances with the savage Petchenègans, a strong Russian empire might probably have become firmly seated on the Balkan peninsula in the 10th century.

After the death of Sviatoslaw, his three sons, who had been entrusted with the lieutenancy of various provinces, divided the inheritance between them. The eldest, Iarapolk, took Kieff and its dependent provinces, Oleg had the land of the Drevliens, whilst Vladimir, the youngest, installed himself in the Novgorod territory. But this fraternal arrangement was of short duration. Four years after the death of their father, Iarapolk made war upon his brother Oleg, killed him, and appropriated his states. Vladimir

feared that he might also be made a victim, and, after recruiting his strength amongst his Varangian kinsmen in the north-west, he took the initiative, marched against his brother, and made himself master of Kieff. During the tumult Iaropolk was killed in his palace by assassins, and Vladimir I. succeeded to the undivided dominions of his father.

Vladimir is one of the most prominent characters in Russian history. He was a brave, skilful, and successful warrior. He subdued the Bulgars of the Volga and the Kama, who thereafter became most important auxiliaries of Novgorod in their commercial relations with the north of Russia and the Caspian. He re-conquered Red Russia from the Poles, and extended his dominions in Livonia and Lithuania. He was a splendid patron of the pagan religion, and erected at Kieff a magnificent statue to Perounne, the god of thunder, at whose altar human victims were sacrificed. His harem in that city was so numerously furnished as to have caused the pagan prince to be compared to Solomon, as much for his addiction to polygamy as for his reputation for wisdom.

Yet Vladimir, the pagan polygamist, became Saint Vladimir, the introducer of Christianity. His strong common sense, strengthened by the reports of what was taking place in more civilised states than his own, revolted against the gross and barbarous superstitions of his nation. Accordingly, he sent agents to foreign nations to inquire into the merits of the various creeds which claimed to be based upon the revelation of the will of the God of Gods. The belief

of the Mussulmans and of the Jews, and the Christian faith, as exemplified at Rome and at Byzantium, became objects of searching inquiry to Vladimir, assisted by his great Council, or Vetché. Mohammedanism was condemned, but not without some lingering regret on the part of the much-married monarch. Judaism was contemptuously rejected, and the choice lay between the Christian systems of Rome and of Constantinople. Probably the monarch feared that the Pope might become a rival in authority ; on the other hand, the ambassadors had been much struck with the splendid ritual of the Byzantine worship in the Cathedral of Saint Sophia. The memory of his grandmother Olga turned the scale. "The wise Olga would have surely chosen the best religion," cried the Council, and the adoption of the Greek rite was decided upon.

Original in all his conceptions, Vladimir would not deign to ask as a favour from the Greek emperors that bishops and priests might be sent to him. Making war upon the empire, he invaded the Crimea, and took the cities of Kaffa and Kherson. Then, sending ambassadors to the Emperors Basil and Constantine, he demanded the hand of their sister, the Princess Anne, in marriage. The trembling emperors replying that a Christian princess could not marry a heathen, Vladimir replied that he was willing to become a Christian. The poor princess was unwilling at first to be sacrificed to a barbarian polygamist, but her objections were finally overcome by patriotic reasonings, and she had no cause in after life to regret her decision. She proceeded to Kherson, to meet her formidable lover,

and the bishop of that city, after baptising the war-like proselyte, bestowed the nuptial benediction upon the descendant of Rurik and the daughter of Byzantium.

Vladimir restored the Crimea to the Greek empire, and returned with his bride in triumph to Kieff. The gold-bearded idol, Peroune, was overthrown, with many marks of contumely, and cast into the river; and as no one was the worse for the wrath of the fallen deity, the people listened with the more willingness to the persuasive or imperative teachings of Vladimir and his priests, and were baptised by thousands in the Dnieper. Christianity was formally inaugurated throughout the land, a regular hierarchy of bishops and priests was established, and the first monastery in Russia was built at Kieff.

Christianity, and its civilising influence, aided by that of the Greek princess, to whom he became passionately attached, produced a marked change in the character of the valiant Russian. He became as continent and clement as he had before been licentious and sanguinary. As a legislator he introduced a portion of the Greek canon law, and instituted a code of civil laws of his own, forming together, according to Gerebtzoff, the first written laws of Russia which have descended to posterity. The feats of arms of this prince, and of his gallant followers, his chivalric qualities, and the splendour of his Court, still linger in popular legends in Russia as memories of the "Sunny Prince Vladimir."

Unfortunately for Russia, he conceived the idea—

a common one in that age—of dividing his dominions amongst his sons and nephews. His object appears to have been, not merely to provide for his very numerous offspring, but also to establish a complete feudal system, under which the various provinces would be ruled by princes of the blood of Rurik as feudatories to a suzerain grand prince. In accordance with his arrangements, therefore, Russia, at his death in 1015, became parcelled out into thirteen principalities, owing allegiance to the grand princely throne of Kieff, which was left to his nephew Sviatopolk, as the oldest heir of the family, he being the son of Vladimir's eldest brother and predecessor, Iaropolk. This central idea of a supreme grand prince with feudatory princes must not be lost sight of; it is at times the only clue which can guide the student amidst the labyrinths of early Russian history.

This unfortunate scheme of divided principalities was further complicated by the custom of inheritance which prevailed amongst the descendants of Rurik, of choosing as successor to a deceased prince, not his eldest son, but the eldest male of the family. Claims and counter-claims, not only to the subsidiary principalities, but also to the supreme power, were constantly submitted to the arbitrament of the sword. If we imagine the wars of the Roses, with thirteen rival princely houses instead of two, we can form some idea of the confusion which ensued. Occasionally some grand prince of more than ordinary vigour or good fortune would assert his supremacy, and give some promise of a return to the glories of

the reign of Vladimir. But such glimpses of prosperity were transient, and the evils caused by these intestine divisions had the most fatal consequences in sapping the power and retarding the civilisation of Russia.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE DEATH OF VLADIMIR I. TO THE TARTAR INVASION—1015-1157.

Sviatopolk I.—Iaroslav—The two Olafs of Norway—Harold Hardrade—Isiaslaw I.—Vsevolod I.—Sviatopolk II.—Nestor the Monk—Vladimir II.—Mstislaw—Iaropolk—Viatcheslaw—Igor—Isiaslaw II.—George Dolgorouki—Andrew—Removal of the Capital from Kieff to Vladimir—Michael—Vsevolod II.—Constantine—George II.—Battle of Lipetsk—Loss of Lithuania—The Knights Sword-bearers, and the Teutonic Knights—Fatal Effects of Anarchy.

THE death of Vladimir I. inaugurated an epoch of civil wars and massacres. The working of the system of appanages had thus an unfortunate commencement, ominous of much further evil to come.

Sviatopolk, who succeeded his uncle and step-father Vladimir as Grand Prince of Kieff, lost no time in attempting to re-unite the divided authority by the murder of his kindred princes. The two brothers, Boris, Prince of Rostof, and Glebe, Prince of Mourom, were assassinated by his orders, and these princes were so pious and so popular, and the circumstances attending their murder so atrocious, that they have been canonised by the Russian Church. When a

third prince had been murdered, war was declared against the tyrant by the Prince of Novgorod, Iaroslav, son of Vladimir. Sviatopolk received help from Boleslas the Great, King of Poland, but was finally driven from his dominions and died in exile.

Iaroslav, after deposing his rival, mounted the throne of Kieff in 1033, handing over to his son, (another Vladimir), the principality of Novgorod. This Vladimir conducted an unsuccessful expedition against the Greek empire. Iaroslav succeeded in making his authority supreme over the whole of Russia. He enlarged the boundaries of his country at the expense of the savage tribes on its borders, and was successful in wars against the Petchenègans, whose power he entirely destroyed, and also against the Poles, the Finns, and the Lithuanians. He continued the work of legislation commenced by his father, Vladimir, and gave to Russia a complete code of laws (*Rouskaïa Pravda*).

This period may be noted as having witnessed the visits to Russia of three notable personages who have made their mark in English history—*i.e.*, the two Olafs and Harold Hardrade, all three Kings of Norway. Olaf Tryggvesen,* the "Olaf the King" of Longfellow's ballads, was sheltered during his infancy from the enemies of his family at the Court of one of the Russian princes, probably Sviatoslaw. Engaging in Viking enterprises, he became an ally of "Svein of the Forkèd Beard," and with him made war upon

* See Snarro Sturleson's "Sagas." Carlyle's Essay on the Early Kings of Norway.

the England of Ethelred the Unready. Olaf made a furious attack upon London, but was baffled by the fortified London Bridge, which his galleys failed to break through. Afterwards, becoming King of Nōrway, and forcible Christianiser of that country and of Iceland, he at last met a sea-king's death in a battle with the fleet of Svein, his old ally.

The other Olaf, king and saint, made war in England for Ethelred and against Canute, stormed London, then in the possession of the Danes, and restored that city to the Saxon king. London Bridge this time was taken by the Norsemen. Returning to his kingdom of Norway, he was expelled by a rebellion of his subjects, and took refuge in Russia with Iaroslav. The Russian prince assisted him to equip an army, and Olaf ~~re~~turned to Norway; but in endeavouring to recover his kingdom he fell in the first battle against his revolted subjects in 1033. The Church of St. Olave's, near London Bridge, is named after this king. So, according to Carlyle, is Tooley Street, by the following process of corruption:—Saint Olave's Street, St. Oley Street, Stooley Street, Tooley Street.

One of the daughters of Iaroslav, the Princess Elizabeth, was married to that splendid and romantic personage Harold Hardrade, whose name rings like the sound of a clarion in that great epic which began at Stamford Bridge and ended at Senlac: Harold the Norseman, the princely boy who fell wounded beside St. Olaf in that hero's last battle; the poet and warrior who took refuge in Russia, and wooed his fair

princess at first with faint prospect of success, but who, with no faint heart in his bosom, went to Constantinople, and won fame and honour and wealth amongst the Varangian Guards of the Byzantine throne, and then returned and won his bride. After he had become King of Norway he went to England with Tostig Godwinson, to win there all that our Saxon Harold would yield to him, "seven feet of English ground," or as much more as his magnificent frame required for a warrior's grave !

Two more of Iaroslav's daughters were married to kings—Anne to Henry I. of France, and Anastasia to Andrew I. of Hungary—whilst his sister espoused Casimir, King of Poland, and his son Vsevolod was united to the Princess Anne, daughter of the Greek Emperor Constantine Monomachus. Iaroslav died in 1054, dividing his dominions amongst his five sons, and the fatal dissensions burst forth anew.

Isiaslaw, the eldest son, mounted the grand princely throne of Kieff. Novgorod about this time thought that it could do without a prince altogether ; it was temptingly rich, and Vseslaw, Prince of Polotsk, could not resist the fancy to seize and pillage it. The Novgorodians appealed to Isiaslaw, who marched against the marauder, who was his nephew, and took him in chains to Kieff. A year later a revolt takes place, Isiaslaw is driven out of Kieff, and Vseslaw reigns in his stead. Then Isiaslaw returns at the head of an army of Poles, and drives out his rival. Four years later he is again expatriated, this time being replaced, according to Nestor, by

his brother Sviatoslaw. At the death of Sviatoslaw, in 1076, Isiaslaw is again restored to the throne, but is killed in battle two years later, fighting against the Polovtzy, a new race of barbarians who had recently arrived from Asia.

He was succeeded by his brother, *Iserolod I.* whose fifteen years of disputed power present only annals of discord unprofitable to recapitulate. At his death, in 1093, his valiant son Vladimir, the son of the Greek princess Anne, was looked upon by the nation as the most worthy successor, but, deferring to the family custom, Vladimir called together a Council, and the eldest male of the race was chosen as Grand Prince in the person of *Sviatopolk II.*, son of Isiaslaw. Then followed another twenty years of carnage and murder, wars with the Polovtzkys, wars between the subsidiary princes, wars of these princes with the grand prince, until the death of the latter in 1113. It was at this period that the great historian of early Russia, Nestor the Monk, passed his tranquil existence in the monastery of Kieff. His authorities, according to Gerebtzoff, might have been partly traditions going back as far as the eighth century, but from written documents he could have had no assistance for dates earlier than the tenth. The Slavonic was not a written language until Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of Christianity amongst the Slavs, adapted the Greek alphabet to the Slavonic tongue. This was done in Moravia about the middle of the ninth century, and this written language did not penetrate into Russia until at least a hundred years

later, the most ancient Russian chronicle being that of Joakim, Archbishop of Novgorod, who flourished at the latter period. To the "Chronicles of Nestor" are usually annexed a series of records by Sylvester and later successors, bringing the narrative down to the commencement of the thirteenth century.

After the death of Sviatopolk, a general assembly was held at Kieff, which declared by acclamation that they would have no other grand prince than Vladimir, the son of Vsevolod. Vladimir again affected coyness, objecting that the right of inheritance rested with Oleg, Prince of Tchernigoff, as the eldest son of Sviatoslaw, who is now said to have been the eldest son of Iaroslaw.

Oleg, however, consented to postpone his claims, which were fought out by a succeeding generation, and *Vladimir II.*, surnamed Monomachus, mounted the throne of Kieff at the age of sixty.

It is probable that this energetic and gifted prince was the real ruler of Russia during the greater part of his manhood, and not merely during the thirteen years which passed between his election to the throne of Kieff and his death.

After his accession to the supreme dignity, Vladimir, in successive campaigns, completed the subjugation of the unruly tribes of the Petchenègans and the Polovtzy. In his will he records that in the course of his life he had made ninety-three campaigns, besides other expeditions of lesser importance; made nineteen treaties of peace with the Polovtzy; made prisoners of one hundred of their chiefs, and afterwards

restored them to liberty, besides killing two hundred more of these obnoxious leaders by throwing them into rivers. And this process of pacification, although somewhat drastic, appears to have been eminently successful in its after results. He ruled with a strong hand in unruly Novgorod, and made the authority of the throne of Kieff respected over the whole of Russia.

Vladimir founded upon the banks of the Kliazma the city which bears his name. He died in 1125, leaving most pathetic and eloquent injunctions to his successors and princely kindred as to mutual forbearance and brotherly love.

Mstislav, the son of Vladimir, succeeded his father; but his right was at once disputed by the descendants of Oleg, who declared that their claims had been postponed at the election of Vladimir, but not extinguished. During the seven years' reign of this prince, who died in 1132, also during the reign of his brother *Iaropolk*, who died in 1139, and that of the third brother, *Viatcheslaw*, who reigned until 1146, when he was deposed, a continuous civil war existed between the two branches. Finally, a Prince *Igor*, a descendant of the House of Oleg, succeeded in gaining possession of Kieff, but in less than twelve months he was in his turn driven out by *Isiaslaw II.*, son of *Mstislav*.

A new and more formidable candidate now appears on the scene. *George Dolgorouki*, another son of Vladimir II., had inherited the principality of Sousdale, a province increasing in importance, and which contained the town of Vladimir. Prince George

asserted his claim against Isiaslaw, and defeated him in battle. Isiaslaw obtained succour from the Kings of Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia, and again took possession of Kieff, this time in the name of Viatcheslaf, who adopted him. George raised the Polovtzy against his rival, and was defeated by Isiaslaw in 1151; but, on the death of Isiaslaw, in 1154, he at last took possession of the capital and of the grand princely throne, of which he kept possession until his death in 1157.

His son *Andrew* succeeded him, and removed the seat of power from Kieff to Vladimir. Several pretenders to the grand princely throne disputed the possession of Kieff, until Andrew, in 1169, marched against one of them, a certain Prince Mstislaw, took the town of Kieff, and pillaged it during three days. From that time the importance of Kieff rapidly diminished. Andrew initiated the policy, afterwards carried to such perfection by the princes of Moscow, of consolidating the authority of the throne, and refusing to divide his dominions amongst several successors. He made an unsuccessful attempt to subdue the independence of Novgorod. He was successful in a campaign against the Bulgars, which led to his being reconciled to the Novgorodians, whose commerce on the Volga the Bulgars had interrupted. Andrew was assassinated, in 1175, by his brother-in-law, Koutchka.

Andrew's son had died during his lifetime, and, as usual, a dispute arose as to the succession. The claimants were Michael and Vsevolod, Andrew's

brothers, and his two nephews, Mstislav and Iaropolk.

After much bloodshed an arrangement was arrived at by which Michael was to reign jointly with his two nephews, Mstislav and Iaropolk. The two younger princes were, however, soon driven into exile, and *Michael* reigned for a brief period, up to the time of his death, in 1177.

He was succeeded by his brother, *Vsevolod II.*, who appears to have been able and energetic, but whose best years were passed in wars with the other princes, against whom he was generally successful.

On his death, in 1213, he was succeeded by his second son, *George II.*, the eldest, *Constantine*, having, by his father's will, been left the government of Rostof only, whilst a third brother, *Iaroslaf*, had the principality of Novgorod. The latter soon quarrelled with his subjects, left their city, and made war against them, stopping their trade and reducing Novgorod to famine. *Constantine* took the part of Novgorod, whilst *George* assisted *Iaroslaf*. A war ensued between the three brothers, and, after a sanguinary engagement at Lipetsk, *George* was defeated, and *Constantine*, in 1216, became grand prince. He died in 1218, and *George* was reinstated in his dominions.

This prince made some successful expeditions against the Bulgars, but his energies and his intrigues were incessantly devoted to the aggrandisement of his own patrimony at the expense of his kindred princes.

But it was whilst Russia was still distracted by these fratricidal and intestine strifes that the Nemesis which dogs the footsteps of selfish and unpatriotic statesmanship closed its grip upon both princes and subjects. The princes had been fighting with each other for over a century, and even calling in the aid of foreigners to shed the blood of their countrymen, and during all this time the boundaries of Russia had receded. On the south, Lithuania had ceased to be Russian, and was becoming a strong and independent state, whilst the communications with the Black Sea and the Caspian were constantly interrupted by hostile tribes. To the east, two communities of Monastic Knights, the Knights Sword-bearers, and the Teutonic Knights, who became amalgamated in 1231, had acquired parts of Livonia, Courland, and Esthonia, taken possession of portions of the territories of Novgorod and Pskoff, and were gradually shutting out Russia from her Baltic sea-board.

But the crowning calamity was yet to come. The avalanche of the great Tartar invasion fell upon the nation, and for more than two hundred years buried under its weight the nascent civilisation of Russia.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE TARTAR INVASION TO THE ACCESSION OF
THE PRINCES OF MOSCOW, 1157-1328.

Political Effects of the Growth of the Papacy, and of Islamism—
Origin of the Empire of the Mogul Tartars—Zinghis Khan—
His Generals invade Russia—Battle of the Kalka—Second
Tartar Invasion and Conquest of Russia under Batyi Khan—
Death of Prince George—Novgorod Spared—Its great Pros-
perity—Calamities under the Tartar Yoke—Russian Grand
Princes subject to the Tartars—Iaroslav II. Sviatoslaw—
Michael II.—Andrew II.—Alexander Nevski; his Brilliant
Career—Iaroslav III.—Vasilii—Dmitrii—Andrew III.—
Michael III.—George III.—Dmitri II.—Alexander of Tver.

DURING the period embraced by the preceding chapters there had arisen in the world two new and mighty political forces, whose energies are far from being wholly expended even at the present day. Both of them were founded upon the perversion of the religious instincts of mankind to the purposes of political ambition, and the origin of both may be traced back to the close of the sixth century, A.D. For Mahomet was born in the year 570, and Pope Gregory the Great, who laid the foundations (perhaps half-unconsciously) of the political ascendancy of the Popes of Rome, reigned from 590 to 604. It is true that Gregory never assumed the position of universal bishop, and he rebuked in the person of John, Patriarch of Constantinople, the assumption by any

mortal of so awful a title.* But the influence acquired by his personal and administrative talents, exercised at a time when Rome was slipping from the grasp of the emperors of the East, and his dogmatic teaching of the supernatural power of the keys, were improved upon by succeeding Popes. Long before the period which we are now about to study, the Popes of Rome had assumed the position of Supreme Heads of the Church, controllers of the consciences of all Christian men, and judges in the last resort of all questions relating to princes and governments.

When Vladimir I. introduced Christianity from Constantinople, the Churches of the East and of the West were ostensibly united in full communion. But fierce dissensions between the two had already broken out; and only thirty-nine years after the death of Vladimir, the Pope formally excommunicated the patriarch, Michael Cerularius, and the Greek and the Roman Churches have ever since remained separated. Russia followed the Greek Church, and another barrier was set up between her and the political life and influences of western and central Europe.

From Arabia had come the creed that there is but one God, and that Mahomet is his prophet;† that it is lawful and necessary to propagate that faith by the sword;‡ that the kingdoms of the earth are to be

* Hallam's "History of the Middle Ages," chap. vii., part 1. Ranke's "History of the Popes," chap. i.

† "Whoso obeyeth the Prophet obeyeth God." Sale's "Koran," chap. iv., p. 63; chap. xli., p. 381, &c.

‡ Sale's "Koran," chap. v., p. 77; chap. viii., p. 132; chap. ix., pp. 135, 137.

conquered by the true believers, and that those who fall in battle against the infidel are received into the joys of a voluptuous paradise.* Those practical although enthusiastic commentators of that creed, the successors of Mahomet, had become the supreme lords of Asia and Africa; with their sharp scimitars they had carved for themselves kingdoms in India, Persia, Syria, Egypt, and Spain, and they threatened to overrun the whole of the civilised world.

But Russia had neither fallen under the ascendancy of the Popes, nor had she been threatened by the champions of Islam. She had taken no part in the successive crusades undertaken in the endeavour to recover the Holy Land from the Mussulman. Her commerce with the East had continued and increased, and she had apparently no quarrel with the new lords of Asia. But a storm was approaching from the East.

Temugin, the son of a Tartar chieftain, tributary to the Chinese empire, was born on the banks of the Hoang-ho, or Yellow River, near the Great Wall of China, in the year 1155. After a chequered career, he succeeded in establishing his authority over all the nomad tribes of central Asia. Fortified by the predictions of a prophet, who brought to his service a miraculous horse, upon which the chieftain pretended to be able to fly through the air, or to ascend to heaven, Temugin was proclaimed Emperor of the

* "Ibid," chap. ix., p. 145; chap. xxxvii., p. 335; chap. xlvii., pp. 375, 377; chap. lv.; chap. lvi.; chap. lxxviii., p. 435. "Gibbon," chap. l., p. 490.

Moguls, or Tartars, under the title of Zingis Khan ("Greatest Lord"). It is a question whether this is the "Cambuscan" of the unfinished "Squier's Tale" in Chaucer.

"At Sarra, in the land of Tartarie,
Ther dwelt a king that werried Russie,
Through which there died many a doughty man;
This noble king was cleped Cambuscan."

The Tartar city of Serai was not founded until some eighteen years after the death of Zingis, but Chaucer's tale of the Brazen Horse which flew through the air is eminently suggestive of the terrible Tartar Emperor.

After establishing his authority over the Tartar tribes, Zingis formally announced his purpose of conquering the world. His prodigious activity and energy, and the enormous number of fierce barbarians who followed his standard, enabled him to boast of encompassing a vaster region of the earth with fire and sword than any preceding conqueror. The slaughter of five millions of human beings is attributed to him. Conqueror of the north of China, of Afghanistan, and of India as far as the Sutlej, and of the empire of the Carizmian Sultans, which extended from the Indus to the Persian Gulf, he was engaged in besieging five cities at the same time—viz., Cambalu (the modern Pekin), Samarcand, Bokhara, Herat, and Candahar, when he sent two of his generals to make the conquest of all the coasts of the Caspian Sea.

These two generals, with an enormous following,

penetrated the Caucasus from Persia by the city of Derbend, marched to the Don, which they crossed, and fell upon the tribe of the Polovtzy, whom they pursued beyond the Dnieper. The Polovtzy solicited the succour of their ancient enemies, the Russians. On the other hand, the Tartars sent ambassadors to the Russians, declaring that they had no quarrel with them, but they had only come against their old "slaves and grooms," the Polovtzy.

But the ancient feuds between the Russians and the Polovtzy had by this time died out; family alliances even had taken place between the princes of the two nations, and the Russians resolved to espouse the cause of their neighbours. They rejected with contempt the Tartar offers of peace; it is said by some writers that they put their ambassadors to death.

A terrible retribution followed. A league was formed by a number of Russian princes, principally of the southern provinces, from which the Grand Prince George appears to have held aloof. Mstislav, the Brave, Prince of Galitch, and Daniel, Prince of Volhynia, with a force composed of the flower of the Russian chivalry, attacked and discomfited the advanced guard of the Tartars on the banks of the Dnieper. Flushed with this partial success, the Russians pushed on to the shores of the little river Kalka, where it debouches into the Sea of Azof. Here, on the 31st May, 1224, before the Prince of Kieff and other of the confederates had arrived, the Russians and the Polovtzy were met and crushed by

an overwhelming Tartar force. No less than twelve princes and seventy boyards, with nine-tenths of the whole army, were slain in this disastrous battle of the Kalka.

Mstislav, Prince of Kieff, capitulated after the battle, but was cruelly put to death. The ferocious conquerors pursued the Russians back to the Dneiper, burning and slaughtering along their track. All Russia was at their mercy, and the terror of the people at this sudden and unexpected catastrophe filled the churches with suppliants for the Divine protection. But the Tartars retired after their victory, loaded with plunder, and resumed their terrible circular tour of the Caspian ; crossing the Volga and rejoining their emperor, Zingis, on the banks of the river Oxus.

The lesson was a terrible one, and the Russian princes had thirteen years' respite from the Tartars to profit by it. But in vain was the warning ; the moment the Tartars were gone their discords commenced anew. Zingis Khan died in 1227, dividing his enormous empire between his three sons, and commanding them to continue his career of conquest. In 1237, his grandson, Batyi, at the head of 600,000 Tartars, appeared on the borders of the Volga and the Kama, attacking the Bulgars, burning the cities, and putting the inhabitants to the sword. Next he appeared in the principality of Riazan, demanding tribute of a tenth part of all money, horses, and harness, and other possessions, submission from the princes, and a contingent of a tenth of the Russian warriors to follow him in his wars. The

Princes of Riazan refused the demands of the Tartar, and implored succour from their suzerain, George, the grand prince, who, however, with unpatriotic selfishness, left Riazan to its fate. The Princes of Riazan, Feodor and Oleg, were overwhelmed and slain, the city of Riazan taken and burnt to ashes. Moscow shared the same fate, and then came the turn of Vladimir. This city was taken and destroyed, and its inhabitants massacred, including the members of the family of the grand prince who were within its walls. George, with the remains of his army, retreated to the banks of the Sita, where he was overtaken by the Tartars; his army was annihilated, and he expiated his mistakes as a ruler by the death of a warrior. Fourteen towns and a number of villages in the principality were pillaged or burnt in the same month. During this year, 1238, the Tartars pursued their devastating course over northern Russia. The next year the unhappy Polovtzy were again attacked, and either massacred or driven out of the country. In 1240 Kieff was in its turn assailed. The city was stormed by the irresistible barbarians, and reduced to ruins, and the citizens slaughtered.

The atrocities committed during the course of this horrible invasion entirely beggar description. The Tartars fell upon a country divided against itself, and the suddenness of the attack left no time for an organised coalition among the princes. The number of the invaders was overwhelming; they were all horsemen, and the rapidity of their movements made

them appear ubiquitous. Cities destroyed, princes and boyards put to death, bishops and priests slain at the altars, women of princely or noble families subjected to insult and carried off to the tents or harems of their conquerors, masses of the population dragged off into Tartary as slaves: these were the penalties inflicted upon the unhappy nation by the cruel Mongols. After the sack of Kieff, the Tartars attacked Poland, Hungary, Moravia, and Silesia; but meeting with a more stubborn resistance as they approached the centres of a more compact civilisation, they withdrew their hordes within the borders of Russia, and began the task of consolidating their hateful sway over that unhappy country.

But during their raid upon Poland and the German empire they had committed the most frightful ravages. Gibbon relates* how the cities of Lublin and Cracow were "obliterated," how the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, the Dukes of Silesia, and the Polish Palatines were overthrown at the battle of Lignitz, and how their savage foes filled nine sacks with the right ears of the slain!

After the defeat and death of Prince George, the conquering Batyi Khan sacked the city of Tver, and advanced upon the territory of Novgorod; but when within about sixty miles of the city he halted, and finally withdrew without attacking it. Nevertheless, the prospect of plundering the richest city in Russia must have been tempting to the Tartar chieftain. Tradition records a direct intervention of Saint

* Gibbon, chap. lxiv.

George, who would not allow his monastery outside the city walls to be desecrated by the proximity of the barbarian hosts. Perhaps the Tartar did not wish his cavalry to become entangled in such a difficult belt of marsh and forest as then surrounded Novgorod; and he might also have anticipated a desperate resistance on the part of its immense population. Possibly, also, Batyi received some heavy pecuniary tribute from the rich citizens. If so, the transaction is not recorded. Batyi was then founding his new capital, Saraï, in a district which commanded the communications of the Novgorodians with the Caspian, by the route of the Volga, and he might consider it better to spare the bee-hive for the sake of a toll upon the honey. It was to his interest to foster rather than to destroy the extensive commerce of Novgorod, as the levying a reasonable duty upon it would afford him a regular and lucrative revenue. Certain it is that the great city was spared, and that both he and his successors favoured Novgorod, whilst they mightily oppressed the princes and people of the remainder of Russia.

It was at about this time that Novgorod was attaining the height of its prosperity. Grown to be an immense city, it was divided into five separate arrondissements, or konetz, each being surrounded by separate stone walls, governed by its own magistrate and popular assembly, but in federative union for the government of the affairs of the principality or republic. It had succeeded in reducing its princes to something like constitutional governors, deposing

or changing them whenever they became unpopular. The great bell which hung in the tower of Iaraslav was the symbol of their independence, for it was tolled to call together the great Vetché, or general assembly of the citizens of "Lord Novgorod the Great" (*"Gospodin Veliki Novgorod"*). Novgorod entered the Hanseatic League in 1260, and its proud motto was "*Quis contra Deos et Magnum Novogardiam?*" At the time of its greatest importance, the city contained 400,000 inhabitants, and, in 1276, the territory under its control or influence extended from the White Sea to Lithuania, and from the Gulf of Finland to the principality of Vladimir.

In 1285, the cities of Riga, Dorpat, and Revel entered also into the Hanseatic League, so that although by that time the Teutonic Knights on the one side and the Swedes on the other were extending their power more and more along the Baltic coasts, the commerce of Novgorod with the ocean was not interrupted thereby. Novgorod was becoming more cosmopolitan and less Russian in its sympathies, and its interests less closely allied with those of the rest of the nation.

Let us now return to the Tartars and their establishment in Russia. The conqueror Batyi Khan built his new city of Saraï on the banks of the Akhtubá, an affluent of the Volga. From thence he sent his inspectors (*Baskaks*) throughout the whole of Russia to make a census of the population, to impose a capitation tax upon the people, and to exact tribute and servile obedience from the princes. The Khans of

the Golden Horde, the title assumed by that branch of the Tartar conquerors, appointed or deposed, punished or decapitated the princes according to their caprice or policy, and forced them to repair as vassals to Saraï, to receive their investiture, or to answer any charge which might be brought against them. When a Tartar officer arrived at the gates of a Russian city, he was received as he sat upon his horse by the principal personage, whether prince, governor, or dignified ecclesiastic, who did homage to the representative of the great khan with the most humiliating marks of abject submission. A bowl of milk was usually offered to the Tartar envoy, and the drops which he allowed to fall upon his horse's mane were licked up by the vassal prince who stood by his stirrup. If a town or a village showed signs of insubordination, an expedition was sent against it, and execution inflicted by sword and fire. The victors did not amalgamate with the vanquished, but remained divided in race, language, and religion, residing in their own new settlements, principally in the south-eastern part of Russia. The native princes were allowed to reign as their lieutenants, but the Tartars fostered their mutual dissensions, and sternly repressed their slightest efforts for independence.

I shall pass briefly over the dreary catalogue of princes who reigned for nearly a century under these humiliating conditions. After the death of George II., whose fate is recorded in the preceding chapter, his brother, *Iaroslav II.*, succeeded him upon the throne of Vladimir. He received investiture at the hands of

Batyï Khan, and did his best to rebuild the ruined cities of Sousdale. But, not content with the homage rendered at Saraï, Batyï constrained him to repair to Oktaï, the supreme or Grand Khan of the Tartars, whose court was on the banks of the Amur, at the extreme east of Asia. Iaroslav made his submission at the feet of Oktaï, but the fatigue of so toilsome a journey was too much for his advanced age, and he died whilst on his way home. He was succeeded by his brother, *Sviatoslaw*, in 1246, but two years afterwards *Michael*, his nephew, the eldest son of Iaroslav, drove out his uncle and seized the throne of Kieff. In 1250 Michael was killed in a battle against the Livonians, and his brother *Andrew* succeeded him. This prince revolted against the Tartars, who defeated and deposed him in 1252. He took to flight and died in exile. It is through Andrew that the House of Romanoff claims its descent from Rurik.

A brief gleam of brightness descends upon the reign of *Alexander Nevski*. The youngest son of Iaroslav, Alexander had been appointed Prince of Novgorod. In 1240 a grand confederation of the Teutonic Knights (now incorporated with the Knights Sword-bearers), the Swedes and the Finlanders, attacked the Novgorod territory with the blessing of the Pope, and for the double purpose of seizing upon the coasts of the republic upon the Gulf of Finland, and of converting the inhabitants to the Catholic faith. Fortified by mysterious portents, amongst which was the glorified appearance of the two princely martyrs, Boris and Glebe, Alexander, although with a force

inferior in numbers, boldly attacked the confederates on the banks of the Neva and achieved a brilliant victory, from which he obtained his surname of Nevski. In 1242 the indefatigable Teutonic Knights had taken the Russian town of Tessoſ, in Eſthonia, ſeized upon the city of Pskoſſ, the old ally of Novgorod, and pillaged the Novgorodian merchants even within a ſhort diſtance of their own capital. Alexander had retired from Novgorod after the battle of the Neva, in conſequence of a diſpute with the citizens. Yielding, however, to the repentant ſolicitations of the Novgorodians, he heroically attacked the Teutonic Knights during the rigours of a northern winter. The battle was fought upon the ice of Lake Peïpous, and again Alexander obtained a ſignal victory. Pskoſſ was delivered, and Alexander brought into Novgorod as priſoners a goodly number of the mail-clad Monastic Knights.

Alexander was as prudent as he was valiant, and ſteadfaſtly reſuſed to countenance any inſurrection againſt the Tartars, well knowing that the times were not ripe. He received inveſtiture at their hands as grand prince, and counſelled the citizens of Novgorod to ſubmit to the cenſus and tribute impoſed by the Khan of the Golden Horde. Batyï Khan, on his part, treated Alexander with the greateſt marks of eſteem and conſideration. Like his father, Iaroſlaw, Alexander was compelled to viſit the Court of the Great Khan at the extremity of Aſia. On his return from one of his journeys to the Court of Saraï he died, in 1263, on his road to Vladimir. His memory was cheriſhed with affection and veneration, and he was canonised by the

Church under the name of St. Alexander Nevski. The Orthodox Church owed him a double debt of gratitude. He had defended her interests with the sword, and had steadfastly resisted the blandishments of Pope Innocent IV., who had attempted to bring him over to the Church of Rome.

Iaroslav III., brother to Alexander, succeeded him, and reigned until his death in 1271; he was succeeded by another brother, *Vasilii*, who died in 1294. Then followed two sons of Alexander Nevski—*Dmitrii*, who reigned until 1294, and *Andrew*, who died in 1304. At the death of Andrew, in 1304, Michael, son of Iaroslav III., and George, Prince of Moscow, the grandson of Alexander Nevski, disputed the succession. The Russian princes had by this time sunk to such a demoralised condition by generations of servitude as to make it the object of their highest ambition to intrigue for the favours of the Khans of Saraï, and to seek to draw down upon their Christian and kindred rivals the vengeance of their Tartar masters.

The khan chose *Michael* as grand prince, but, after some years of war between the two competitors, George contrived to provoke the Tartar suzerain against his rival, and Michael was summoned to Saraï and put to death (1320).

George was then invested with the coveted and precarious dignity, but after one year the appointment was revoked, and *Dmitrii*, the son of Michael, was made grand prince in his stead, and provided with Tartar troops to enforce the decision. *Dmitrii*

avenged his father's death by pursuing and killing the unfortunate George. Ivan Kalita, the brother of George, demanded of the khan vengeance for the murder of his brother. The request was granted, and Dmitrii was in his turn disposed of, just one year after his accession, and the khan bestowed the grand princely throne upon *Alexander*, Prince of Tver, (1324), another son of the Prince Michael, who had been deposed by the Tartars.

Alexander had continued to reside at Tver, and it was in that city, in 1328, that his reign was brought to a close.

Ouzbeck, the Khan of the Golden Horde, conceived the idea of forcibly converting the Russian people to the faith of Mahomet. As a commencement, he caused a troop of Tartars to be introduced by stratagem into the city of Tver, with the intention of assassinating Alexander and all the principal boyards of his Court, and of compelling the people to conform to Islam.

The plot was discovered, and the treacherous troop, who had introduced themselves under friendly pretences, were exterminated. In revenge, Ouzbeck sent a powerful army against Tver. Alexander took to flight, and Ivan Kalita, Prince of Moscow, took advantage of the circumstance and obtained of the khan investiture as grand prince in the place of Alexander. Two years later Alexander and his son, after submitting themselves to the mercy of the khan, were put to death at Sarai. A new era now opens in Russian history with the commencement of the supremacy of the Princes of Moscow.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF IVAN KALITA TO THE
ELECTION OF MICHAEL ROMANOFF, 1328-1613.

Growth of the Principality of Moscow—*Ivan Kalita*—*Simeon the Proud*—*Ivan II.*—*Dmitrii Donskoi*—Defeat of the Tartars—The Tartars Burn Moscow—*Vasilii I.*—*Vasilii II., the Blind*—*Ivan III., the Great*—Russia Emancipated from the Tartars—Subjection of Novgorod—*Vasilii III.*—*Ivan IV., the Terrible*—Assumes the Title of Tsar—The Tsarina Anastasia Romanoff—*Ivan's* Victories—His Cruelties—Massacre at Novgorod—Annexation of Siberia—*Feodor I.*—Murder of Prince *Dmitrii*—*Boris Godounoff*—*Feodor II.*—The “False *Dmitrii*”—*Vasilii IV.*—*Chouisky*—Invasion by the Poles and the Swedes—Popular Rising under *Minine* and *Pojarski*—Expulsion of the Poles—Election of *Michael Romanoff*.

A fresh nucleus of organisation now begins to exert its attraction in Russia. The Princes of Moscow appear upon the scene ; they are destined to consolidate the nation by the cohesive force of a powerful central authority, and eventually to emancipate the country from the yoke of the Tartars.

Of all the many principalities, the number of which had increased by continued subdivisions, that of Moscow had hitherto been the most insignificant. It had been erected into a small appanage in favour of Daniel, a younger son of Alexander Nevski. Before his time Moscow was merely a village in the middle of dense forests clustered around the fort erected by George Dolgorouki. Daniel increased the importance of his

small principality by conquering from the Princes of Riazan the town and district of Kolonna, and he inherited from his nephew, Ivan Dmitrievitch, the appanage of Peréiaslaw, the acquisition of which he had to defend by force of arms. Daniel was succeeded by his son George, who afterwards became grand prince, and who added Mojaïsk to the territory of Moscow at the expense of the Prince of Smolensk. Upon the death of George, who, as we have seen, was killed by Dmitrii, the principality of Moscow fell to his brother, the astute Ivan I., surnamed Kalita.

It is from the accession of Ivan Kalita that the new departure in Russian history may be dated. We have seen how he had induced the khan to invest him with the title of grand prince in the place of the unfortunate Alexander of Tver. He made Moscow the capital instead of Vladimir, inducing the Metropolitan of Vladimir to remove there also. His next stroke of policy secured to him a most powerful lever for aggrandisement. Craftily representing the advantages which would result to the Tartar treasury by employing one single agent for the collection of the tribute-money from all the princes, Ivan obtained authority from the khan to become the sole collector for the whole of Russia. He made skilful use of the privilege. Any of the princes who resisted his authority were treated as rebels to the khan. The power of the Princes of Moscow was from that time in the ascendant, and its stability was not a little increased by their abandoning the traditional custom of succession hitherto followed by the House of Rurik.

Ivan compelled the Princes of Tver and of Sousdale to submit to his authority ; other territories he purchased and added to his principality. He may be compared in some respects to Louis XI., both in the nature of his work of consolidation and also in the methods which he employed for the purpose.

It was, indeed, time that, either by force or by stratagem, the different provinces should be more closely knit together, otherwise Russia would have ceased to be a nation. She was not only conquered, but was becoming dismembered. Even Kieff, the ancient capital, the city of St. Vladimir, had fallen into the hands of the Lithuanians. Between Novgorod and the sea, the Teutonic Knights and the Swedes had joined hands to occupy the whole coast of the Baltic.

Ivan Kalita died in 1340. There were several competitors for the throne, and the ancient custom of succession was pleaded before the khan. The eldest son of Ivan, however, *Simeon*, surnamed the *Proud*, appears to have been well provided with golden arguments, owing to the influence of which at the Court of Saraï, he was duly invested by the khan as grand prince in succession to his father, and the growing supremacy of Moscow was, during his reign, maintained and confirmed. Dying without children in 1353, he was succeeded by his brother, *Ivan II.*, who does not appear to have possessed a full share of the activity and ability of his pushing family. At his death, in 1358, he left a son of nine years old, *Dmitrii*, afterwards surnamed

Donskoï. The succession was at once disputed by another Dmitrii, Prince of Soudale, who for three years assumed and maintained the title of grand prince at Vladimir. But St. Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow, took the part of the young Muscovite prince, the son of Ivan.

Alexis had been ordered to Saraï to cure from blindness a favourite wife of the Khan Djanibeck. The Metropolitan effected a marvellous cure, and his credit at the Tartar Court was used in favour of the boy Dmitrii, to whom the khan adjudged the succession to the throne. As grand prince, Dmitrii had to hold his own by force of arms against the Princes of Tver and Riazan, over whom he gained considerable successes. The power of the Khans of Saraï was no longer so formidable as in times past, and partial engagements took place between the Russian princes and the Tartar troops, in one of which Dmitrii came into collision with a lieutenant of the khan.

The Khan Mamaï resolved to revenge this insult, and collected a powerful army to march against Moscow. The Prince of Riazan was traitor to the national cause, and prepared a coalition with Jagellon, the powerful Grand Duke of Lithuania, in aid of the Tartars.

Dmitrii, on his side, made a passionate appeal to the patriotism of the princes of Russia, which was aided by the exhortations of Saint Sergius of Troïtsa, who blessed their arms, and promised them victory. And now, for the first time after 140 years' bondage, the Russians were able to cope with their oppressors

in a general engagement. After an obstinate and sanguinary battle at Koulikovo, on the banks of the Don, the Russians were victorious; their losses were considerable, but the slaughter of the Tartars was enormous; one hundred thousand of them, we are told, were slain either in the battle or during the pursuit. The heroic leader of the Christian host was saluted with the title of Dmitrii Donskoï, and the Russians believed that their deliverance was complete. But the hour of their freedom had not yet arrived.

A new and famous conqueror appeared among the Mogul Tartars. The great Timour, or Tamerlane, sat upon the throne of Zingis Khan, whose deeds he emulated and even surpassed. He caused Mamaï, the khan who was defeated by Dmitrii, to be deposed, and replaced by a favourite general called Toctamish. Two years after the battle of Koulikovo, Toctamish marched against Moscow, accompanied by the traitor Oleg, Prince of Riazan; and the gallant Dmitrii, abandoned by his allies, was compelled to fly from his capital, which was burnt by the Tartars.

On the retreat of the Tartars, Dmitrii had at least the satisfaction of marching against Oleg, who took to flight, but Riazan was pillaged by the incensed Muscovites. The quarrel was finally appeased by the mediation of the holy Sergius, and Dmitrii gave his daughter in marriage to the son of Oleg.

Dmitrii died in 1389, leaving the Principality of Moscow augmented in importance and territory. His son, *Vasilii*, succeeded him without opposition. He contrived to add to his dominions the Princi-

palities of Souzdale and Nijni-Novgorod, besides making various other accessions of territory, and he asserted his claims to supremacy, with more or less success, over Novgorod the Great.

Toctamish, the Khan of Saraï, rebelled against his suzerain, Timour. The latter marched against Astrachan and Saraï, which cities were burned, and ravaged the south-east of Russia.

During this reign, the city of Smolensk was lost to Russia and annexed to Lithuania (1403).

The death of Vasiliï, in 1425, was the signal for a new struggle for the succession between his son, named after him, and subsequently called *Vasiliï the Blind*, and George, a son of Dmitriï Donskoï, who attempted to revive the ancient custom of succession. The struggle lasted for twenty-five years, during which George and his two sons alternately drove Vasiliï from Moscow, or were themselves, in turn, driven out. It was during this prolonged struggle that Vasiliï fell into the hands of his rivals, and had his eyes put out by Chemiaka, the son of George. Finally, after the death of his adversaries, he regained undisputed sway at Moscow.

His son, *Ivan III.*, surnamed the Great, mounted the throne in 1462. He commenced his reign by annexing to the Muscovite territory a number of semi-independent principalities. The Prince of Tver, proving obstinate, was subdued, and his dominions absorbed by force of arms.

But it was with Novgorod that the severest struggle was to take place. A woman of great talent

and riches, Marfa, the widow of the Possadnik Boretski, was at that time all-powerful in Novgorod. She appears to have been virtual ruler of the republic. She had sent out colonies, headed by her sons, to the borders of the White Sea and the banks of the northern Duna. Resisting the attempts of the Princes of Moscow to curtail the ancient privileges of Novgorod, she persuaded the citizens to elect Casimir, King of Poland, as their prince, upon condition of his observing the old laws of the republic. Ivan marched against Novgorod in 1470, overcame the feeble resistance offered to him, put to death several of the principal boyards, and placed lieutenants of his own to govern the city. From time to time, as new resistance arose, Ivan imposed fresh conditions of servitude. In 1478, the Novgorod territory was annexed to Moscow, and the principal commercial establishments of the great trading republic removed to Moscow or Nijni-Novgorod.

Ivan now prepared for the great task of rescuing Russia from the yoke of the Tartars. The power of the khans had become greatly enfeebled by the invasion of Timour, and the Golden Horde had become split up into separate khanates—those of Saraï, Kazan, Astrachan, and the Crimea. A quarrel between Achmet Khan of Saraï and Mengli-Gherai Khan of the Crimea was judiciously fostered by Ivan, who, uniting his forces with those of the Crimean Tartars, attacked and defeated Achmet. The splendid city of Saraï was utterly destroyed and razed to the ground, and has never been rebuilt. He also con-

quered the khanate of Kazan, and annexed it to his dominions, carrying the khan captive to Moscow. Russia became completely free from the domination of the Tartars in 1480, after 240 years of crushing and humiliating servitude.

During this century the long agony of the enfeebled Greek empire was brought to an end. A new and formidable race of enemies to Christendom settled in Europe, and closed round the shores of the Black Sea. In 1356, the Ottoman Turks first crossed the Hellespont. During the years 1359 to 1389, under Amurath I., they conquered Roumelia, Bulgaria, and Servia. In 1453 Constantinople was taken by storm under Mahomet II., and the last of the Greek emperors, Constantine Palaeologus, died the death of a hero in defending its walls. Ivan the Great married Sophia, the niece of Constantine, and from that time assumed the arms of the Byzantine empire, the double-headed eagle.

On the death of Ivan, in 1462, his son, Vasilii III., surnamed the Brave, tranquilly succeeded to the throne of Moscow, in accordance with the will of his father, although he was the second son, and the rightful heir was presumably Dmitrii, the son of the deceased Prince Ivan, eldest son of Ivan the Great.

Vasilii succeeded in extinguishing the last of the subsidiary principalities. The Prince of Riazan was accused of treasonable alliances with the Khan of the Crimea. He was thrown into prison at Moscow, from which he managed to escape, but his principality

was confiscated. Vasilii destroyed the last vestiges of independence of the republics of Pskoff and Novgorod. He warred with the Tartars and the Lithuanians, and from the latter he succeeded in recovering the city of Smolensk (A.D. 1514).

At his death, in 1534, he was succeeded by his son, *Ivan IV.*, surnamed *the Terrible*, a child of four years of age. The regency was placed in the firm hands of an able woman, his mother, Helen. The Court of Moscow was now full of princes reduced to the rank of boyards. Helen controlled and punished the intriguers of this turbulent Court, made war with the Tartars of the Crimea and of Kazan, and maintained the rights of her infant son during four years, when she died of poison. For several years confusion and intrigue reigned supreme, until, at thirteen years old, the young Ivan showed the vigour of his character by making a *coup d'état*, seizing the reins of power, and ordering Andrew Chouïska, who had been usurping the functions of government, to be devoured by dogs in his presence. Four years later he caused himself to be solemnly crowned Tsar, instead of by the title of Great Knyaz or Prince, which had been borne by his predecessors. The word Tsar was of common application in the Russian language to the wielders of sovereign or imperial power, whether ancient or modern, but it had never before been assumed by a Russian prince; and in popular estimation it instinctively connects itself with a claim to the inheritance of the Casars of Constantinople, that magnificent "Tsargrad" which has had so magnetic

an influence upon the swords of the Russians during so many centuries. Nestor invariably spoke of the Russian princes as "Knès," but the Greek emperor, he denominated "Tsar."

The marriage of Ivan with Anastasia Romanoff initiated a period in his reign which appeared fraught with the most glorious promise. The brother of the new Tsarina, Nikita Romanoff, became also allied with the race of Rurik, by marrying Eudoxia, a Princess of Soudale, descended from the Grand Prince Andrew, son of Iaroslav II., and from this marriage descends the present imperial family.

The wise and gentle Princess Anastasia exercised during her lifetime a most salutary and restraining influence over the savage tendencies of the young prince; his two able counsellors, the priest Sylvester and the boyard, Adachief, controlled the domestic policy, and Ivan exerted his talents as a skilful and valiant warrior against the enemies of his country. He waged war with the Knights Sword-bearers, repressed a rebellion of the Tartars of Kuzan, took their city by storm, and attacked and annexed the Tartar khanate of Astrachan. He drove back the marauding incursions of the Crimean Tartars, and victory appeared to crown all his efforts. But after the death of Anastasia, in 1560, his mind seems to have undergone a terrible change. He became irritable and suspicious, banished his two wise counsellors, and finally, driven to fury by the defection of some of his boyards, abandoned himself to the most frantic excesses of cruelty. Princes and boyards,

and humbler victims who had the misfortune to fall under his displeasure, were ruthlessly slaughtered together with their whole families. He slew his eldest son in a fit of passion, and remorse and grief for this deed rendered the remainder of his life a continual torment. The unhappy city of Novgorod fell under his displeasure. Ivan entered the defenceless city at the head of his troops, accepted a banquet offered to him by the chief citizens, and rose from it to order a slaughter of the inhabitants. A tribunal called the "Tribunal of Blood" was assembled; for five weeks it held its atrocious assizes, and it is said that from 20,000 to 30,000 victims were put to death by the most varied forms of cruelty. The complete ruin of the great city which had given the diadem to his ancestor, Rurik, was finally accomplished.

Ivan's last years were gloomy and miserable, alternating between fits of remorseful asceticism and relapses into debauchery and cruelty. His arms suffered humiliating reverses in Lithuania and in the Baltic provinces, whilst the Tartars of the Crimea invaded Russia, and burned down the whole of Moscow except the Kremlin.

It would be charitable to suspect that some of Ivan's atrocities were prompted by insanity; and in passing judgment on Russian history we must not forget that this was the age of atrocities. During this same century, and in the most civilised centres of Europe, the worst crimes of Ivan were fully matched by his Holiness Pope Alexander VI., by his most Catholic Majesty, Philip II. of Spain, and his most

Christian Majesty, Charles IX. of France. Spite, however, of the tyranny of Ivan, this extraordinary prince never appears to have altogether lost his popularity with the people of Moscow. After committing some new act of cruelty, he would mount his stone rostrum in the "Red Plain," and explain to the mob that his vengeance had been executed upon traitors, and for the good of the nation, after which he would retire to his palace absolved by their acclamations. And when he threatened to abdicate, he was recalled to Moscow by the urgent expostulations of his subjects.

Ivan was the first Russian prince who annexed territory in Siberia, advised thereto by the counsels of one Strogonoff, a merchant of Perm. The new territory was taken possession of in the name of the Tsar by a troop of Don Cossacks, under their leader, Jernack Timoféevitch. Ivan was married seven times, and he sent an embassy to our Queen Elizabeth to demand the hand of one of the ladies of her Court, but the lady declined the honour.

Ivan's son, *Feodor*, the next Tsar, was a feeble prince, the puppet of his wife, Irene Godounoff, and of her brother, Boris Godounoff. Feodor was childless, and Boris, who had accumulated all the functions of power in his hands, intrigued for the succession. The principal obstacle in his way was the young Dmitrii, brother of the Tsar. In 1591 the young prince, a boy of ten years of age, was assassinated, and although Boris executed a number of persons for the murder, the crime was popularly attributed to him.

It was during the reign of Feodor that Boris

caused the first Russian Patriarch to be consecrated at Moscow.* His energies were also devoted to a prosecution of the war with Sweden in the Baltic provinces, in which he was partially successful.

Feodor died in 1598, and with him became extinct that branch of the House of Rurik claiming descent through Ivan Kalita. But although the race of Rurik was numerously represented by other branches, yet, with the assistance of his sister and the consent of the boyards, *Boris Godounoff* appears to have had small difficulty in being elected Tsar. He reigned for seven years with great ability and considerable success. He still further extended the Russian provinces in Siberia, was a patron of education and of the arts, and beautified the Kremlin.

But his power was insecure, and the people hated him on account of the murdered Prince Dmitrii. The Romanoffs were popular; he banished several of them, and compelled Feodor Romanoff to become a monk under the name of Philarète.

There now occurs a most marvellous episode in Russian history. A young monk, or, as some believe, a groom, called Gregory Otrepieff, gave himself out to be the young prince, miraculously preserved from assassination. Favoured by the King of Poland, who assisted him with troops, the Pretender entered Russia, and, recruiting large forces from the populace, he boldly summoned the Tsar Boris to deliver up the throne. The latter, in addition to the other causes of his unpopularity, had attempted to "attach" the

* *Vide* chap. iii. p. 44.

wandering peasants to the soil. After some checks, the Pretender's cause was in the ascendant. Boris died suddenly of a fit of apoplexy. His son *Feodor*, a youth of sixteen, was proclaimed Tsar, but was killed in a popular tumult after a reign of six weeks.

The Pretender marched to Moscow, and entered it in triumph. The mother of Prince Dmitrii acknowledged him as her son, and he was solemnly crowned Tsar, amidst the acclamations of the people. He was married to a beautiful woman, Marina Mnisek, daughter of the Voïevode of Sandomir. He reigned for eleven months only. He appears to have shocked the prejudices of the people by departing from many of the old customs of the Moscovite Court; he surrounded himself with a Polish guard, and was suspected of a desire to introduce the Roman Catholic faith, to which his wife, Marina, belonged. A conspiracy was formed amongst the boyards, and nine days after his marriage he and his favourites were set upon at night and assassinated. Prince Vasilii Chouisky, a descendant of Rurik and the head of the conspiracy, was chosen somewhat precipitately, and without waiting for the consent of the other provinces, and crowned Tsar under the title of *Vasilii IV*.

The success of the Pretender, transient though it had been, attracted fresh impostors. A new Dmitrii appeared, professing to have miraculously escaped a second time. As the mother of the real prince had acknowledged the first Pretender as her son, so did the fair Marina, the widow of the first impostor, acknowledge the second as her husband. He was

called the "Brigand of Touchino," from the name of a village near Moscow where he took up his quarters. Here he was joined by Marina, and Polish troops came to aid him, as had been the case with the other Pretender. Chouisky, on his part, invited the assistance of the Swedes, and gave up to the King of Sweden the city of Karéla. Two more false Dmitrii made their appearance. After a short and calamitous reign, Vasilii Chouisky was deposed by the people of Moscow, and forced to become a monk (A.D. 1610). The King of Poland, Sigismund, now threw off the mask; he took possession of Moscow, and demanded the election of his son Vladislav as Tsar. A deputation including Philarète Romanoff, now Bishop of Rostov, and Prince Galitzin, was sent to Sigismund, offering the crown of Russia to Vladislav. Had Sigismund behaved with common prudence, the crowns of Poland and Russia might have been peaceably united. But he now desired to become Tsar himself, and he demanded that Smolensk should be delivered up to him.

The national spirit in Russia was at length thoroughly aroused, and a patriotic war was proclaimed by a popular leader, Kozma Minine, a butcher of Nijni-Novgorod. Prince Dmitrii Pojarsky, a noble of great military talent, associated himself with the revolt, and these two representatives of different classes of society united together in the heroic resolve of freeing their country from its deadly enemies, whether Poles, Swedes, Tartars, or brigands. The King of Poland had carried off the Tsar Vasilii as prisoner;

and so soon as he heard of the patriotic uprising of the Russian people he also threw in prison the two ambassadors, Philarète and Galitzin. After a long and brave resistance, he took Smolensk by storm. But the tide of success now turned. The struggle was long and desperate, but finally the Russians laid siege to Moscow, the Polish garrison capitulated, and the cause of Sigismund was lost.

A general assembly of boyards and representatives from all the provinces was convened at Moscow, for the purpose of filling the vacant throne. The Tsar Vasilii Chouisky was a prisoner amongst the Poles; his reign had been disastrous, and he had never been recognised as Tsar by the great body of the nation, who had regarded his election by the citizens of Moscow as illegal. Amongst the princely families, that of Romanoff was the most popular, and the marriage of Nikita Romanoff with the Princess Eudoxia of Sousdale, descended from Andrew, a brother of Alexander Nevski, had enabled his descendants to claim the honour of descending from Rurik. Nikita's son, Feodor, otherwise Philarète, Bishop of Rostof, was a sagacious and popular statesman, but he was debarred from the throne by his monastic orders. Under these circumstances, the choice of the nation centred upon the son of Philarète, *Michael Romanoff*, a youth of sixteen years of age, who was on 21st February, 1613, proclaimed Tsar, amidst the acclamations of the people.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF THE HOUSE OF ROMANOFF TO
THE DEATH OF PETER THE GREAT, 1613-1725.

Michael I.—War with Poland and Sweden—*Alexis I.*—The Ukraine Annexed—Wars with Poland and Sweden—The Patriarch Nikon—*Fedor III.* War with Turkey—Condition of Russia in 1682—Of Turkey—Of Poland—Of Sweden—*Ivan V. and Peter* ; Joint Reign—Regency of Princess Sophia ; Her Deposition—Peter's First Campaign in the Crimea—His Visit to Holland and England—War with Sweden—Charles XII. Defeats the Russians, the Poles, and the Saxons—Foundation of St. Petersburg—Mazeppa—Peter Defeats Charles at Pultava ; Makes War with Turkey ; is Defeated—Death of Charles XII.—Comparison between Charles and Peter—Peter Creates a Navy ; Conquers a Baltic Seaboard—War with Persia—His Reforms—His Death.

UPON ascending the throne, the young Tsar Michael found his empire at war with both Poland and Sweden. Many of his cities were in the possession of the enemy, whilst his provinces were overrun with rebels and marauders. The second "False Dmitrii" was dead, but the enterprising Marina, who had a son by him, was now married to a marauding Cossack, Zaroutzki, who held the city of Astrakhan in the name of the young Pretender. The arms of Michael were first turned against this brigand ; Zaroutzki was defeated and executed, the son of Marina was hanged, and the romance of that lady's career was closed by a prison.

In 1617 Michael made peace with Gustavus

Adolphus, King of Sweden, assisted by the mediation of the English Court. The Swedes gave up Novgorod, Star Roussa, and Ladoga, but retained the shores of the Gulf of Finland, and received an indemnity of 20,000 roubles. Russia was doomed to wait for two more generations before she could obtain the right of launching even a cock-boat upon the Baltic. Sweden and Poland remained in possession of the whole coast-line, their inheritance from the now defunct order of the Knights Sword-bearers.

The war with Poland continued. Vladislas, the son of King Sigismund, disputed the title of Michael. Again the Polish troops appeared before Moscow; but the Russians were now united, and better able to defend themselves. The Polish prince consented to a fourteen years' truce, one condition of which was that the Tsar's father, Philarète, was released from captivity (1618).

Philarète was promoted to the rank of Patriarch, and took an important part in the government of the empire.

In 1632 King Sigismund of Poland died, and his son, Vladislas, succeeded him. The war was renewed, and the Russians were defeated in a regular engagement under the walls of Smolensk. A treaty of peace was again signed. Smolensk was relinquished to the Poles, together with a money indemnity, but King Vladislas renounced his pretensions to the crown of Russia.

Michael annexed considerable tracts of territory on the Caspian and in northern Asia. His reign is

a turning-point in the history of Russia, and from it stretches down to the present time the long, unbroken road of conquest and aggrandisement.

Michael was succeeded, in 1645, by his son *Alexis*, a prince of great valour and ability. As regarded the long-standing quarrel between Poland and Russia, the turn of the tide was now approaching. An intolerable act of oppression led to an insurrection against the Poles by the Cossacks of the Ukraine, in 1648, under their Hetman, Bogdan Khmelnitski. The struggle between the Poles and the Cossacks lasted, with varying success, for several years, the Cossacks calling to their assistance the Tartars of the Crimea. At length, in 1654, the Cossacks sought the aid of the Tsar, and asked permission to become subjects of the Russian empire. Alexis accepted their allegiance, and made war upon Poland.

Alarmed at his successes in that country, the Swedish king, Charles X., interfered, and the next thirteen years were spent in alternate wars with Poland and Sweden, during which Alexis overran Lithuania, and established his authority in the Ukraine. He invaded the Baltic provinces with doubtful success.

The wars with Poland terminated in 1667, when a treaty of peace was signed, by which Russia retained Smolensk, Kieff, and all the Ukraine territory up to the eastern banks of the Dnieper, the Poles resuming their sway over the Cossacks of the western shore. Again the Cossacks revolted, this time calling to their

assistance those terrible enemies of Christendom, the Turks. Russia held her own on the left or eastern bank, but the Turks, under Mahomet IV., ravaged the western shores of the Dnieper, and drove out the Poles. It was not until after the feeble Polish king, Michael, was dead that his brave successor, John Sobieski, expelled the Turks from the Ukraine.

The reign of Alexis is memorable for the reforms introduced into the services and liturgies of the Church by the Patriarch Nikon, the provoking cause of the great schism of the Raskolniks.*

Alexis was twice married. By his first wife he had two sons, Feodor and Ivan, and six daughters, and by his second wife, Natalie, one son, the celebrated Peter, and two daughters. On the death of Alexis, in 1676, he was succeeded by his eldest son, *Feodor*, an accomplished prince, but of feeble health, whose reign lasted but six years. The troubles in the Ukraine still continued, the Turks and their subjects, the Tartars of the Crimea, invading that territory. But Russia maintained its ground, and inflicted a severe defeat upon the Grand Vizier, Kara Mustapha. Peace was concluded in 1681, and Turkey formally acknowledged the right of Russia to the whole of the territory as far as the cataracts of the Dnieper.

The power of the nobles was gradually diminished by each succeeding Tsar. Quarrels respecting precedence had been carried on, not only at the Court, but also to such an absurd length as to interfere with the discipline of officers of the army in the face of the enemy.

* *Vide* chap. xii.

These "precedences" were inserted in "Registers of Antiquity of the Noblesse." Feodor caused his Council to consent to the abrogation of these privileges, and the books were brought into his presence and burned.

We are now approaching the period of Peter the Great, and it may be useful to consider the position of Russia and of its nearest neighbours before describing the reign of that most remarkable monarch. We have witnessed the substitution of a strong central Government, under the able guidance of the autocratic Tsars of Moscow, for the divided authority of a number of princes whose quarrels and ambitions had reduced Russia to anarchy and rendered her a prey to the aggressions of her neighbours. During the reign of the earlier Tsars, we hear, indeed, of an assembly of boyards, and also of a Zemskoï Sobor, or General Assembly, called together upon extraordinary emergencies, and composed not only of the boyards but also of representatives from the provinces and cities. But these assemblies consisted for the most part of nominees of the Tsar, and their decisions were accepted or rejected according to his supreme will and pleasure.* The Tsar reigned in Moscow a semi-barbarous despot, and the habiliments and surroundings of his Court and person, and the pomp which he affected, were those of an Asiatic rather than of an European prince.

Before the period which we are approaching (1682), the commerce of Russia had miserably declined. The routes by sea had now become more commodious, and less costly than those by the Russian rivers. The dis-

* Gerebtzoff, vol i., chap. 14.

ruption, towards the end of the 14th century, of the commercial ties between Novgorod and the Hanseatic League, and the terrible disasters inflicted upon Novgorod by Ivan III. and Ivan IV., had each in turn contributed to the decay of the trade of Russia.

The opening up of the port of Archangel by Capt. Challoner, in 1553, was like a new discovery of Russia for the purposes of commerce, and the English not only developed an export trade there, but they pushed on to the Caspian Sea during the reigns of Ivan the Terrible, Feodor, and Boris Golounoff. The trade on the Caspian, however, was annihilated by wars and pirates. The English merchants were expelled from Russia by the Tsar Alexis, and the revolts of the Cossacks of the Don, which took place during his reign, almost destroyed the commerce down the Volga.

Politically speaking, Russia was scarcely reckoned among the nations. Turkey was sovereign mistress of the Black Sea; she had conquered all its European coasts. The Tartar khans of the Crimea were her subjects, and the Sea of Azof was under her dominion. Her aggressive power, indeed, as a formidable danger to the liberties of the whole of Europe, had begun to decline. Her Sultans were no longer as they had once been, the greatest generals and the most skilled military engineers amongst contemporary princes. They were still girded with the sword of Othman, but they no longer flashed it in the van of battle. The Viziers now led the armies of the Sultan, and their defeats by the Austrians at St. Gothard on the Raab, in 1664, by the

Russians in the Ukraine, and by John Sobieski and his Poles, had relieved the fears of Europe and proved that the Turks were no longer invincible.

Poland had at one period risen to such importance as to have become the most powerful state of eastern Europe. Her territory had extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Memel and Danzig were Polish ports; Prussia tributary to her power; Lithuania, Kieff, Smolensk, and the Ukraine annexed to her territory; Moldavia and Wallachia under her protectorate. From this pre-eminence she had declined, principally from the introduction of the pernicious system of an electoral monarchy, and the increasing license of a factious and turbulent nobility. Under these conditions of decay Russia had begun to regain the old provinces which Poland had wrested from her. But Poland was still a power in Europe. At the time of the death of Feodor, the Hero King, John Sobieski, had already defeated the Turks at Choczim and in several subsequent campaigns. Two years later Sobieski rendered an inestimable service to civilised Europe.* With a comparatively small force he marched to the relief of Vienna, which was besieged by the Turks and reduced to the last extremities, took advantage of the military incompetence of the Vizier, boldly attacked the enormous host of the Turks, and put them to flight with tremendous slaughter. From that moment the Turks have never gained fresh conquests in Europe, but have continually been forced to

* Sir Edward Creasy, "History of the Ottoman Turks," chap. xvi.

give up territory formerly won by the Crescent from the Cross.

Sweden, by its possession of the whole line of maritime provinces from the northernmost end of the Gulf of Bothnia to the frontiers of Courland, entirely shut out Russia from the Baltic. Finland, Ingria (the province in which St. Petersburg now stands) Esthonia, and Livonia were Swedish provinces. Charles XI., who then occupied the throne, was the master of a well-organised and influential state and of a powerful and well-disciplined army, fortified with the prestige of his own military successes and of the glory and victories of the great Gustavus Adolphus.

Such was the condition of northern and eastern Europe about the time when, upon the death of Feodor, the new era in Russian history commences.

On the death of Feodor the throne devolved by right to Ivan, the elder of the surviving brothers. But Ivan was feeble, both of mind and body, and it was announced to the assembled boyards and notables that by the will of the deceased Tsar, Peter, the youngest son, was to reign instead of Ivan. His mother, a second wife of Alexis, and of the family of Nariskin, was named regent. But the Princess Sophia, one of the daughters of Alexis by his first wife, rebelled against this arrangement. A terrible insurrection of the Strelitz, a turbulent and powerful corps of militia, now ensued. Massacre and pillage reigned for three days in the streets of Moscow. Peter's life was in imminent danger, and his two uncles, Athanasius and Ivan Nariskin, and many of the principal personages

attached to their family, were barbarously put to death. Sophia has been accused of inciting this insurrection ; it is certain that she profited by it. A compromise was finally arranged by which the two half-brothers *Ivan V.* and *Peter* were to reign jointly, with Sophia as regent.

For the next seven years Sophia reigned over Russia in the name of the two young Tsars, her brothers. Peter was excluded from all due preparation for his future high position, his education was neglected, and he was purposely encouraged to acquire brutalising and vicious habits, which he was never able to shake off in after life. But his strong passion for military affairs threw him into daily contact with the motley group of officers of the rude troops of the capital, amongst whom were two foreign adventurers, a brave and able Scotch soldier, Patrick Gordon, and a Genevese, François Le Fort. From these two men he learned not only the great inferiority in discipline and organisation of the raw Russian militia, but also the immense gulf of barbarism which separated his country from the more civilised nations of Europe. His genius was awakened, and he resolved with all the energies of his powerful character to surpass the warlike deeds of his father, Alexis, to become a conqueror, a civiliser, and a legislator, and to raise Russia high in the scale of nations.

The first task he set himself was to break off the yoke of his half-sister. Peter was now seventeen years old, and had the people on his side ; he took possession of Moscow, crushed a fresh insurrection of

the Strelitz, seized the person of Sophia, and forced her into a convent. Master of the government, he next determined to form a fleet. Russia had no ships, and no sea-ports to launch them in, with the sole exception of Archangel. Peter found in Moscow a Dutch shipwright named Brandt, who had been brought there by his father with some similar idea. Brandt was ordered to construct a large sailing boat, which was launched on Lake Perciaslavle, between Moscow and Iaroslav. Satisfied with the success of this attempt, he ordered the construction of a flotilla upon the river Don, and with this, and with a considerable land army, he resolved to seize the port of Azoff from the Khan of the Crimea. His first attempt, in 1695, was not successful, but it was renewed the following year; and, notwithstanding the assistance sent by the Sultan of Turkey to the aid of his vassal, the khan, Peter stormed the town of Azoff. He had now a port upon the Sea of Azoff, and he there commenced the construction of a fleet. He returned in triumph to Moscow, and the death of his brother, Ivan, the same year, rendered him sole sovereign of Russia.

Peter now formed the extraordinary resolution of leaving his dominions for the purpose of inspecting the navies of foreign powers, and of personally acquiring the art of the ship-builder. In April, 1697, after establishing a Council to govern in his absence, and leaving his army in charge of Gordon (now raised to the rank of general), he went to Holland, and under the name of Peter Mikhailoff,

worked and studied as a private individual. Part of his time was spent at Amsterdam, where he learnt the rudiments of physical science, geography, surgery, and anatomy; the remainder was consumed at the ship-building village of Saardam, where he worked with his own hands at every handicraft connected with his favourite pursuit.

William III., King of England and Stadtholder of Holland, was then at La Hague. Peter paid him an unceremonious visit, and accepted an invitation to visit England, going over to London in the king's yacht. He lodged first in a house in Norfolk Street, Strand, but soon removed to Saye's Court, Deptford, the pleasant country seat of John Evelyn, which was hired for him in order that he might be near the ship-building yards, where again he worked with his hands as a labouring shipwright. Peter was visited several times by the king, and interviewed by the courtiers, who were aghast at his habits and manners.* The eccentric Lord Carmarthen, who shared his fondness for naval matters, got on better with him, and did a good stroke of business by purchasing for £15,000 the right of introducing tobacco into Russia. He left England, accompanied by a little army of shipwrights, engineers, doctors, artillerymen, and skilled artisans, and returned to Moscow by way of Vienna, after seventeen months' absence, his return being hastened by the news of another insurrection of the incorrigible Strelitz. On his arrival, he found that General Gordon had already put down the insurrection with

* Evelyn's Diary. Macaulay, *Hist. of England*, chap. xxiii.

great slaughter. Peter resolved to break the power of this turbulent corps for ever; more than two thousand of the survivors were executed, and large numbers banished to Siberia. His wife, Eudoxia (the mother of his son, Alexis), and his sister, Martha, were suspected of favouring the designs of the insurgents for the purpose of opposing his schemes of reform. He divorced Eudoxia, and both princesses were punished, as his sister Sophia had been, by seclusion in a convent for life.

Peter's energies were next devoted to the acquisition of territory and seaports on the shores of the Baltic, and in achieving this object he showed profound political sagacity as well as the talents of a great general.

In order to understand the political situation, we must glance for a moment at the position of Poland. At the death of John Sobieski, in 1696, three candidates competed for the crown—James, the eldest son of the late king, the Prince of Conti, and the Elector Augustus of Saxony. The nobles rejected the brave and capable prince, son of their Hero King, and the contest was then between the Frenchman and the Elector, the latter of whom settled the matter by marching into Poland with a Saxon army, and taking possession. Peter espoused the cause of Augustus, and whilst working as a shipwright in Holland engaged to assist him, if required, with an army of 30,000 men. The alliance thus commenced was turned to account by Peter in his views against Sweden. A young king, Charles XII., inherited the Swedish

crown in 1697 at the age of fifteen ; his talents were considered as but mediocre, and the opportunity of his youth and inexperience appeared favourable to Peter's ambition. A league was formed between the Tsar of Russia, the King of Poland, and the King of Denmark, with the amiable intention of relieving the young Swedish king of a portion of the cares of empire.

War was declared on various pretexts : the Danes invaded Holstein (the dukedom of Charles' brother-in-law and ally) ; the King of Poland, with his Saxon troops, marched into Livonia ; whilst the Tsar Peter sent an army of 80,000 men, who ravaged the province of Ingria, and laid siege to the city and port of Narva.

The young King Charles XII. astonished the world. He was presiding at a Council of ministers in the listless manner which had been usual to him whenever much talk was going on, when, after listening to the projects of his advisers as to negotiations and compromises, he suddenly announced his intention of putting himself at the head of his army, and attacking in detail each of his three formidable enemies. In May, 1700, at the age of seventeen, he left his capital, Stockholm, never more to revisit it. Assembling his fleet, he embarked with his troops, sailed to the island of Zealand, disembarked within seven miles of Copenhagen, and defeated the Danish troops who opposed his landing. The capital of Denmark was at his mercy before its king was even aware of the expedition having been planned. Within

six weeks the King of Denmark signed a treaty, withdrawing from the tripartite league, giving full satisfaction to the Duke of Holstein, and paying the expenses of the war. The King of Poland was at the same time besieging Riga, but upon the approach of Charles found it prudent to abandon the siege.

Meantime, the Russians were besieging Narva. Charles embarked upon 200 transport vessels, with 20,000 troops, landed at Pernau, and marched rapidly across the Esthonian promontory from the Gulf of Riga to the Bay of Narva, to throw himself upon the masses of the Russian army. So precipitate was his march that he arrived in face of the enemy with only from 8,000 to 9,000 men; the Russians, under the Duke of Croy and Prince Dolgorouki, numbered 60,000. Peter was absent, having quitted the besieging army to hurry on reinforcements.

Charles, with his small troop, surprised and defeated the detached corps which he met on his march, attacked the entrenched camp of the main army, and, as Gerebtzoff puts it, “destroyed in a *tour de main* the army of the Tsar.” Charles was in the front of the attack; a spent ball lodged in his cravat, and a horse was killed under him. Only 600 of the Swedes were killed, whilst the Russians, in killed and drowned, lost from 20,000 to 25,000 men; 30,000 of the survivors are said to have surrendered. The whole of the artillery, and all the Russian generals and superior officers, fell into the hands of the victors.

Peter heard the news as he was marching towards

Narva at the head of 40,000 fresh troops, but he knew too well the inferiority of discipline and equipment of his raw levies to venture to match them against the trained and valiant veterans of the Swedish king.

In the course of six months, Charles had exchanged the reputation of an insignificant prince for that of a great conqueror. He had defeated two out of his three adversaries. He now turned his attention to the third, Augustus, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland.

In the spring of 1701 he crossed the Duna near Riga, in the teeth of a Saxon army under Marshal Stenau, defeated the Saxons, took rapid possession of Courland and Lithuania, entered Poland, and overthrew all resistance. Augustus was dethroned by the Diet, and Stanislaus Leczinsky, a *protégé* of Charles, elected king in his stead.

Not content with this success, Charles pursued Augustus into his hereditary dominions of Saxony, and there dictated to him the terms of peace. The Elector renounced all claim to the crown of Poland, and formally withdrew from all treaties which he had made with other princes, and "especially with the Tsar of Muscovy." This took place in 1707.

Charles was for the time the most formidable monarch in Europe. Although not at war with the Emperor Joseph, he had marched through the Austrian territory without asking permission or vouchsafing explanation, declared himself protector of the Protestants of Silesia, and exacted a treaty

from the Emperor according to his newly proclaimed clients. As a favourite of Fortune, his head was being turned by the intoxication of her caresses.

The next project of Charles was the overthrow and dethronement of the Tsar. But Peter in the meantime had not been idle. He had constantly assisted his ally, Augustus, with troops, frequently accompanying them into Poland, and, although worsted at first in all his engagements with the Swedes, his armies had been gradually acquiring experience and discipline. Whilst Charles had been pursuing his campaigns in Poland and his military promenades in Saxony, Peter had been continuing his attacks upon the Baltic provinces and consolidating his power in the rear of his rival, who was figuring as the arbiter of northern Europe. Whilst Charles, the conqueror, was in Poland, taking a crown from Augustus and giving it to Stanislaus, Peter, the vanquished, was at the same time founding his new city of St. Petersburg (1703) upon Swedish territory; and in 1704 he took Narva, the scene of Charles' first great triumph over him.

But he was as prudent as he was indomitable, and when he felt that his country was to be exposed to the invasion of the hitherto invincible Swedish hosts, he suggested terms of peace. Charles, however, had resolved to try conclusions once for all with his great adversary. Rejecting all proposals, he declared that he would only sign a treaty with the Russians at Moscow,

Peter epitomised the position of himself and his rival by two pithy sayings which have reached posterity. The one was, "By so many defeats I shall learn how to conquer;" the other, "My brother Charles acts the part of Alexander, but he will not find in me a Darius." And, in fact, Charles, elated by success, committed the fatal error of despising the talents and resources of an ever-watchful enemy.

From Dresden Charles set out on his march, which he hoped would end at Moscow with the dethronement of Peter. Proceeding through Poland in 1707, he re-established the affairs of his *protégé*, King Stanislaus, and left that monarch a corps of 10,000 Swedes to assist him. Marching in pursuit of the Tsar, he nearly caught him at Grodno, Peter escaping at one end of the city, whilst Charles, at the head of about 600 of his guards, entered at the other. Peter tried to return the compliment. Finding that Charles was far in advance of his army, he sent back 1,500 Russians at night, hoping to take the king prisoner. Charles was, however, too vigilant. With his small guard he attacked the Russians, sword in hand, and put them to flight. The next June Charles crossed the Beresina, everywhere driving back the Russians. He beat them at Hollosin, passed the Dnieper at Mohilev, and marched towards Smolensk, near which city he again defeated them. The road from Smolensk to Moscow was now open to him, the Tsar was in full retreat, and Count Levenhaupt was marching to join the Swedes with provisions, ammunition, and a well-equipped army of

20,000 men. It was the month of September, 1708; Moscow was within 250 miles of the victorious Charles, who had never yet known a defeat. The end of the Russian monarchy and of all Peter's schemes of reform appeared to be approaching.

It was, however, the ruin of Sweden which was to arrive instead. Peter must have learned with astonishment and satisfaction that, instead of continuing his march to Moscow, or of awaiting the arrival of Levenhaupt, Charles had suddenly decided to march southwards into the Ukraine.

Mazeppa, the Hetman, or chief, of the Cossacks of the Dnieper, conspired against the Tsar, and invited Charles to make his country the basis of operations against the Russians, promising to join him with all his warriors and to supply him with provisions. The ever-active Peter, however, had become acquainted with the movements of Mazeppa, sent a *corps d'armée* into the Ukraine, seized Mazeppa's head-quarters and treasure, together with his principal partisans, and caused another Hetman to be elected in his place. Mazeppa came into the camp of Charles more as a fugitive than as an ally. In the meantime Levenhaupt was marching to join the king, but the fatal mistake of Charles in marching away from his supports now began to bear fruit. The Russians had closed in between the king and Levenhaupt, and the latter found himself constantly harassed on the march and surrounded by greatly superior numbers. At last the Tsar in person attacked the Swedish general, and, after a series of

obstinate combats lasting three days, the Swedes were defeated, and only 5,000 men out of 20,000, with their brave general at their head, were able to cut their way through the Russians and join the king. The military chest, with a large sum in coined treasure, and all the artillery and supplies, were in the hands of the enemy.

Charles thus found himself in a desert country, with winter approaching, and cut off from all supplies or reinforcements. During the rigorous winter and spring of 1708-9, thousands of his troops perished from frost and for want of adequate food and clothing. When the summer at last arrived, Charles was left with but 18,000 men. Nevertheless, he commenced investing the little town of Pultava, and here, on the 8th July, 1709, Peter resolved to bring the struggle to a final issue. By overwhelming forces, and after a desperate resistance, the Swedes were entirely crushed, their army destroyed, and their principal generals taken prisoners. Charles escaped as a fugitive, and took refuge with the Turks, taking up his residence at Bender, a town on the Dniester, in the province of Bessarabia, where the Sultan caused him to be treated with munificent hospitality.

One more chance of success presented itself to the vision of the vanquished conqueror. By intrigues at the Court of Constantinople, and with the assistance of the Khan of the Crimea (who was smarting under the loss of Azof, seized from him by Peter), Charles fomented the bad feeling existing between the Turks and the Russians. It is recorded by Voltaire that

the Sultana, mother of the Sultan, struck with admiration for the hero who hated their mutual enemies, the Russians, continually pursued her imperial son with the inquiry, "When will you aid my lion to devour the Tsar?" Finally, the Sultan declared war against the Russians, and his Vizier, Baltagi Mehemet, crossed the Danube with 100,000 men, and advanced toward the Pruth. Peter was treated by Cantemir, the Hospodar of Moldavia, just as Charles had been treated by Mazepa. Cantemir, conspiring against the Sultan, promised Peter aid and resources, which the Moldavians, when the time arrived, refused to furnish. Relying on these promises, and advancing to the frontier with only 40,000 men, Peter found himself caught in a trap, without provisions and surrounded by vastly superior forces. A battle upon the banks of the Pruth, in which he suffered heavy losses, resulted in his army being completely hemmed in without chance of escape.

Charles set out from Bender, in the hope of witnessing either the death or the captivity of his enemy; but on his arrival at the Turkish camp, he found, to his bitter mortification, that Peter had been saved from destruction, and by the agency of a woman.

Catherine, the humble peasant girl whom Peter had privately married, had accompanied him, and shared the dangers and privations of the campaign. Gathering together her jewels, and all the treasures which she could collect, she sent these presents to Osman Aga, the lieutenant of the Vizier, together

with a letter asking for terms. The Vizier agreed to a treaty upon such easy conditions as have caused him to be accused of being a traitor to the Sultan. Peter agreed to restore the town of Azof and all its territory, and to withdraw his troops from Poland. He was allowed to retire with his whole army, baggage, and artillery ; and Turkey thus lost her last chance of crushing the development of her most persistent and most formidable enemy (July 21, 1711).

From this moment the great Charles XII. ceases to be a potential agent in history. For three years afterwards he wasted his time in Turkey in vain attempts to excite fresh wars with Russia. In time he fatigued the generous hospitality of the Sultan, and, with a handful of attendants, even made a frantic armed resistance against the Turkish troops who were ordered to remove him from Bender. In 1714 he returned to his own dominions, traversing Europe as a solitary fugitive. The rest of his life was spent in continual and generally fruitless combats, principally in Norway, and in equally fruitless and still more visionary projects, including a scheme for the invasion of England in favour of the Pretender. He was killed on the 30th November, 1718, by a musket-ball, at the siege of Friedrichshall.

Perhaps two more remarkable rivals never acted upon the same scene than Charles and Peter. Both princes were ambitious, enterprising, indefatigable. Both appear to have been born warriors, and leaders of men ; but Peter, spite of his grossness and brutality,

was a profound statesman as well as a general, whilst Charles was an errant adventurer even more than a general. Peter was licentious, and given to debauch. Charles was a woman-hater, and drank nothing but water. Both were occasionally stern and cruel. Charles was so, probably from resentment, whilst Peter's vengeance, if at times fierce and sanguinary, was most usually dictated by motives of policy. Charles succeeded to a splendid army, whose discipline and devotion was a marvel to the world; he spent the lives of this gallant soldiery in fruitless enterprises, and left the Fatherland exhausted and dismembered. Peter began his campaigns with ill-armed and half-barbarous levies; he created out of these materials a formidable and well trained army, and with it finally swept away the barrier of steel which the Swedes had for ages been raising between Russia and the sea.

During the absence of Charles amongst the Turks, Peter had been busy upon the building of his new city of St. Petersburgh, and defending it by erecting a strong fort at Cronstadt. He had created a navy in the Baltic, and with it he had defeated the Swedish fleet on several occasions. On the death of Charles XII., the treaty of Neustadt, between Sweden and Russia, gave to Peter a strip of Finland, with Viborg and its adjacent islands, and the whole of Ingria, Esthonia, and Livonia; in short, the Baltic coast with all its ports, from Viborg to Riga. The King of Poland, Stanislaus, had already been deposed, and Peter's ally, Augustus, reinstated.

In 1722 Peter undertook an expedition against Persia, which resulted in the cession to Russia of the greater part of the western shore of the Caspian, including the towns of Derbend and Baku.

Besides the building of the new capital at St. Petersburg, and its successful establishment as a commercial sea-port, Peter carried out vast works in the construction of canals and roads, and the building of ports and arsenals, and he laboured in a thousand different ways to raise the standard of civilisation in Russia. His method of introducing these changes was violent and despotic, and his work bears the traces of its origin. But so much had been destroyed in Russia that force was the only recognised factor in politics, except fanaticism, and the world must be grateful that force was used by this original genius for purposes which were in the main intelligent and beneficent. His acquisitions of territory on the Pacific coast are mentioned in chapter xii.

In 1724 he caused his peasant wife, Catherine, to be crowned Tsarina, publicly stating amongst his reasons for this act that she had saved him and his army during the Turkish campaign on the banks of the Pruth. On the 28th January, 1725, he died in the arms of this remarkable and devoted woman, whose influence over him, in spite of all her faults, appears to have been generally exercised for good.

CHAPTER X.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF CATHERINE I. TO THE DEATH
OF ALEXANDER I., 1725-1825.

Doubts as to Peter the Great's Choice of a Successor. — *Catherine I.* — *Peter II.* — *Anna* — Signs a Constitution — Abolishes it — Her favourite, Biren — Interference in Poland — War with France — Invasion of the Crimea — *Ivan VI.* — His Deposition — *Elizabeth* — War with Sweden — War with Prussia — The Russians Defeat Frederick the Great — Maintains an Army in Poland — *Peter III.* — Peace with Prussia — Assassination of Peter — *Catherine II.* — Her Wars with Turkey and with Sweden — Her Partition of Poland — Her extensive Annexations — *Paul* — Joins the Coalition against France — Campaigns of Suvarof — Paul makes Friends with Napoleon and Quarrels with England — His Assassination — *Alexander I.* — War with France — Battle of Austerlitz — War with Turkey — Battles of Pultusk, Eylau, and Friedland between Napoleon and Alexander — Peace of Tilsit — War with England and Sweden — Annexation of Finland — Peace made with Turkey, England, and Sweden — Napoleon's Invasion of Russia — Burning of Moscow — Destruction of the "Grande Armée" — Battle of Leipsic — Alexander twice Marches to Paris — Congress of Vienna — War with Persia — Death of Alexander.

As a legislator, Peter had decreed that the Tsar should possess the absolute right of appointing his successor (Ukase, dated 5th Feb. 1722). His views on this subject led him even to declare to the Austrian ambassador that it might become the duty of the sovereign to replace an incapable heir by a successor not of the imperial blood.

But Peter's death had followed suddenly upon a severe attack of a malady which had been aggravated by his intemperate habits, and he had been unable, although he had made the attempt, to commit his dying wishes to writing. There were numerous heirs of the imperial blood, the principal of whom were, his *grandson*, the son of the unfortunate Alexis, afterwards Peter II. ; his *daughters*, Anna, Duchess of Holstein, mother of Peter III., and Elizabeth, afterwards Tsarina ; and his *nieces* (daughters of the elder brother, Ivan), Catherine, grandmother of the unfortunate Tsar Ivan, and Anna, Duchess of Courland, afterwards Tsarina. Nevertheless, at a Council held on the day of his death, Prince Menchikoff proposed his widow Catherine as his successor. The proposition was strenuously opposed ; not only was there no lack of inheritors of Peter's own family, but it was generally believed that he had designed his daughter Anna to succeed him. But Menchikoff gained over the troops in garrison, seized the treasure, and was successful in overcoming the dissentients. Peter's Private Secretary, and Theophanes, Archbishop of Plevscof, were ready to affirm that the Tsar had declared to them his will that Catherine should succeed him, and that it was with that intention that he had caused her to be crowned Tsarina during his lifetime.

The humbly-born peasant girl was accordingly proclaimed, as *Catherine I.*, Empress of all the Russias.

The career of this celebrated woman was romantic, beyond perhaps any parallel in history. Her original

name was Martha Rabe, this name being altered to Catherine, according to Russian custom, when she was in after-life received into the Orthodox Church. She was born at Ringen, in Livonia, of humble parentage, and being left an orphan she was taken as a child into the household of a Lutheran pastor named Gluck, who employed her to attend upon his children. Married at an early age to a Swedish soldier, she was separated from her husband by the fortune of war immediately after her nuptials, and was made prisoner by the Russians at the capture of the town of Marienburgh. She was taken into the household of General Bauer, from which she passed into that of Prince Menchikoff, where her beauty first attracted the attention of the Tsar Peter. She accompanied Peter in many of his expeditions, sharing his toils and dangers, and participating in his rude manner of life with a courage and endurance most remarkable in one of her sex. She has been by turns unduly eulogised and most atrociously calumniated. Impartial historians will, however, agree in attributing the blemishes in her not irreproachable private character to the misfortunes of her youth and to the extraordinary vicissitudes of her chequered career. Her influence over Peter, and, through him, upon the destinies of Russia, was merciful and beneficent, and it is probable that no princess of high birth and gentle nurture would ever have retained so great a hold upon that rude and passionate nature. Not only by her heroism and sagacity upon the banks of the Pruth, but also on the numerous occasions when she mitigated the cruelty of Peter and

turned aside his passion from its intended victims, did she earn the gratitude and affection of the Russian nation.

Catherine's political importance is bound up with the life of Peter, whom she survived but little more than two years. During the short period of her independent reign her energies appear to have dwindled into insignificance, and she was entirely under the influence of Prince Menchikoff, who governed in her name. This favourite of fortune, Alexander Menchikoff, whose abilities justified his selection by Peter, was originally a baker's apprentice in Moscow.

Upon the death of Catherine, in 1727, she was succeeded by the grandson of Peter the Great, a boy of twelve years old, the son of the unfortunate prince Alexis, who was crowned as *Peter II.* At the death of this young prince, in 1730, the direct male line of the House of Romanoff became extinct.

It has been supposed that Peter the Great intended his daughter, Anna of Holstein, to succeed him. Anna of Holstein died in 1728, and her infant son (afterwards Peter III.) should have succeeded Peter II., according to the will of the Empress Catherine. But a party amongst the nobles, with the four princes of the House of Dolgorouki at their head, had determined to limit the absolute power of the crown, and they made choice of Anna, widow of the Duke of Courland, as the most promising instrument for their purpose. Anna of Courland was the second daughter of Ivan, the elder brother of Peter the Great, and she had no expectation of succeeding to the Russian crown; she

therefore accepted with alacrity all the conditions imposed upon her.

But she had no sooner mounted the throne than a reaction set in against the Dolgorouki faction. She had signed a charter which greatly limited the imperial prerogative, and placed all the executive power in the hands of a small Council of the higher nobility. A deputation, purporting to represent the whole body of the landed proprietors, presented themselves at the palace, and implored the Empress to reign after the manner of her predecessors.

Anna expressed to Prince Vasilii Dolgorouki, in the presence of the assembled nobles, her surprise and indignation at his having deceived her respecting the real wishes of her subjects. She was graciously pleased to accede to the prayers of the suppliant deputation, and consented to reign from thenceforth as an absolute sovereign. She accordingly called for the obnoxious charter which she had signed, and tore it up in their presence. The Dolgoroukis were banished, and the favourite, Biren, who had arrived from Courland, was practically invested with the government of Russia, so complete was the ascendancy which he maintained over the Empress.

Whatever natural good qualities Anna may have possessed, her reign was rendered disgraceful by the shameless rapacity and cruel tyranny of the low-born adventurer Biren, whom she succeeded in raising to the dignity of Duke of Courland. Many of the principal and most estimable of the nobility who were unfortunate enough to displease him were tortured by

the knout or cruelly executed. Over 20,000 persons are said to have been exiled to Siberia, and more than 11,000 put to death. Amongst many other victims, the Dolgoroukis were recalled from exile, only to suffer at the hands of the executioner; the Princes Vasilii and Ivan Dolgorouki were broken alive on the wheel.

On the death of Augustus II., King of Poland, in 1733, the Poles elected Stanislaus Leczinsky, the dethroned *protégé* of Charles XII. But Anna espoused the cause of Augustus III., son of the late king, and placed him on the throne by force, sending into Poland for that purpose an army under Marshal Münich. Russia became embroiled with France, Louis XV. having married the daughter of Stanislaus, whose cause he supported with a feeble contingent of French troops, 2,000 of whom, with their leader, Lamoignon, were taken prisoners by the Russians. In 1735 Russia took part in the war between France and Austria as the ally of the latter.

In 1736 Russia invaded the Crimea, and in 1737 the Emperor Charles VI. of Germany joined with the Russians in an attack upon Turkey. The Russians several times overran the Crimea, and ravaged the whole country with merciless severity, under Marshals Münich and Lascy. They penetrated, under Münich, into Moldavia and Bessarabia, and gained a battle near Khoezin. Russia gained by this war some slight rectification of boundaries in the Ukraine, but the gain was dearly purchased by the enormous losses she had sustained by famine and disease during her fruitless campaigns in the Crimea.

A retrocession of territory took place during this reign on the borders of Persia; Russia giving up to the celebrated Nadir Shah the province on the Caspian which had been conquered by Peter the Great. The submission to Russia of three hordes of Kirghiz Tartars gave her territory, however, which strengthened her power on the north of the Caspian, and gave her a firm hold in Central Asia.

At the death of Anna, in 1740, she was succeeded, in accordance with her will, by the infant grandson of her elder sister Catherine, *Ivan VI.* Catherine Ivanovna had married Charles Leopold, Duke of Mecklenburgh. Catherine's daughter, Anna, married Anthony Ulric of Brunswick, whose son was Ivan VI.

In the following year, 1741, a revolution broke out, caused by the unpopularity of the mother of Ivan, who governed in his name. The young Tsar, who was but sixteen months old, was deposed, and *Elizabeth*, the surviving daughter of Peter the Great and of Catherine I., ascended the throne. The poor little dethroned Tsar was kept in seclusion during the whole of his life, and was at last killed in the fortress of Schlussemburgh, during the course of an attempt to rescue him.*

Elizabeth engaged in a war with Sweden, which was terminated in 1743 by the Treaty of Abo, whereby Russia gained another strip of Finland. She likewise took part in the "seven years' war" in

* This happened in 1764, during the reign of Catherine II. For an interesting account of this unhappy prince, see "Coxe's Travels," Book v. chap. 2.

Germany, as the staunch ally of Maria Theresa, and the persistent enemy of Frederick the Great. Her troops gained considerable advantages over the Prussians. At Kunersdorf, near Frankfort-on-Oder, the Russians, under Soltikof, assisted by an Austrian detachment, administered to Frederick in person so crushing a defeat that the great king called on the bullets to end his life. For four days he despaired of his fortunes, and declared that he would not survive the ruin of his country.*

In 1760 the Russians occupied Berlin for several days. Had Elizabeth's life been longer, it is probable that Frederick's ruin would have been consummated.

From the year 1758 she maintained an "army of observation" in unfortunate Poland, which country, under the incapable government of Augustus III., was fast sinking into hopeless anarchy.

Elizabeth died in 1761, having named as her successor Charles Peter, Duke of Holstein Gottorp, the son of Anna of Holstein, eldest daughter of Peter the Great. This prince ascended the throne under the title of *Peter III.* His reign was but of six months' duration. The army which had triumphed over the greatest military leader of the age was disgusted to find that their new sovereign was not only the friend, but the undignified toady of Frederick the Great. Peter made a violent and sudden change in the whole course of the national policy. The Prussian monarch had offered to cede a portion of East Prussia as the price of peace. Peter made a precipitate treaty with

* Carlyle's "Life of Frederick the Great," Book xix. chap. iv.

Frederick, without exacting any conditions, and immediately began remodelling his army after the Prussian fashion, shocking his subjects by his ostentatious assumption of manners and sentiments discordant to the national prejudices.

A revolution broke out, headed by his consort; he was seized, hurried to prison, and there murdered. Sophia Augusta, daughter of the Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst, had been married to Peter as a matter of state policy; but little love had been lost between them. Notoriously on bad terms, she had been threatened with arrest by her husband. She had contrived to win the popular sentiment, and the conspirators placed her on the throne by the title of *Catherine II.*, that being the name by which she had been received into the Greek Church.

This most able, ambitious, and unscrupulous princess, by her astute and energetic policy, augmented enormously the power and territory of the empire. Two prolonged and sanguinary wars with Turkey, the first of which ended in the Treaty of Kainardji in 1774, and the second in the Treaty of Jassy in 1792, resulted in the conquest and final annexation of the whole of the Crimea, and in the advance of the limits of the empire to the Dniester. In the second of these wars Russia had Austria for an ally. During its course occurred the terrible siege of Ismail.* The Russian General Suvorof was commanded by Prince Potemkin to "take Ismail, what-

* Ismail, a town in Bessarabia, on the Kilia mouth of the Danube.

ever be the cost." Suvorof took it by storm ; the loss on the part of the assailants was extremely heavy, whilst between 30,000 and 40,000 men perished in its defence, without counting the thousands of old men, women, and children who were slaughtered during the sack and destruction of the city. During these wars, Russian fleets appeared both in the Black Sea, and also, for the first time, in the Mediterranean.

A war between Russia and Sweden, lasting from 1787 to 1790, was terminated by the peace of Wærela, which restored as nearly as possible between the two countries the *status quo ante bellum*.

In the most unscrupulous of all her schemes of aggrandisement, the partition of Poland, Catherine had for her confederates the monarchs of Austria and Prussia.

In 1772, by a treaty between Catherine, Maria Theresa of Austria, and Frederick the Great, a large portion of Poland was seized and divided between the three powers. Maria Theresa is said to have had scruples of conscience on the subject, and did not ratify the arrangement until her mind had been relieved by the approval of the Pope. In 1793 Catherine and King William II. of Prussia seized and annexed still larger portions of Polish territory. In 1795 a final partition took place of all that was left of hapless Poland between Catherine, William II. of Prussia, and the Emperor Franz II. The last king, Stanislaus, was forced to abdicate, and died at St. Petersburg in 1798.

The extinction of the independence of Poland was

not accomplished without a prolonged struggle, the principal leader of the Poles being the hero Tadeusz Kosciuszko. The history of this able, gallant and disinterested patriot is worthy of study by all who admire the struggles of brave men against overwhelming odds in the defence of their country.

The spoils of Poland were divided as follows :—

		Russia.	Prussia.	Austria.
First partition	1772	42,660	13,660	27,660
Second do.	1793	96,000	22,000	none
Third do.	1795	43,000	21,000	18,000
Square miles		181,000	56,000	45,000

It may not be out of place here to remark that this distribution was altered after the Napoleonic wars. The Treaty of Vienna gave to Russia 220,500; to Prussia 20,000; and to Austria 35,500 square miles.

Included in this vast accession of territory to Russia was the Baltic province of Courland, with its two ports, Windau and Libau.

Catherine's ambition was not yet satiated; she was actively engaged in schemes for an attack upon Constantinople, for a war with Persia, and even, it is said, for an overland attack upon India. A few months more would have seen her armies march to an attack upon revolutionary France. But it was then that our poet Coleridge sang :—

“I marked Ambition in his war array!
 I heard the mailèd monarch's troublous cry;
 Ah, wherefore does the northern conqueress stay?
 Groans not her chariot on its onward way?”

A still mightier monarch, Death, suddenly laid his hand upon the Semiramis of the north, and arrested her plans of conquest. She died of an apoplectic fit in November, 1796.

Paul, son of Catherine and of Peter III., succeeded his mother in the forty-third year of his age. The French revolution had broken out; Louis XVI. and his queen, Marie Antoinette, had been executed, and the principal powers of Europe had formed a coalition against France.

Paul joined the coalition, and sent an army under the veteran Suvorof into Italy, another force into Switzerland, a third to join the English forces under the Duke of York, in Holland, whilst a fourth expedition embarked and sailed to the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean expedition captured the French garrisons of the Ionian Isles, and Suvorof gained some splendid victories over the French in Italy; but in Switzerland and Holland the results were less fortunate. Paul suddenly changed his line of politics, recalled Suvorof and all his troops, and withdrew from the coalition. He now conceived a violent admiration for Napoleon, whose brilliant career had at this time conducted him to the position of ruler of the French, under the title of First Consul. Paul was preparing to throw himself into the arms of Napoleon in the same way that his father had become a violent partisan of Frederick the Great. As a natural consequence, he took an antipathy to his late ally, England, recalled his ambassador from London, seized all the English vessels at Revel and St. Petersburg, and prohibited

all commerce between the two countries. A war with England was imminent. Paul had become unpopular with the army and with his Court by his capricious and fickle behaviour, and by his increasing tyranny. A conspiracy was formed in the Russian Court for the purpose of compelling him to abdicate. He refused to sign the act of abdication, and resisted the attempt to arrest him. In the scuffle he was overpowered and strangled, during the night of the 23rd March, 1801.

Paul left four sons—Alexander, Constantine, Nicholas, and Michael. The eldest son ascended the throne, under the title of *Alexander I.*

Alexander commenced his reign by renewing the friendship with England. In 1804 Napoleon was proclaimed Emperor of the French. In the following year Alexander entered into an alliance with Austria, joining her against France, and sharing with her the defeat of Austerlitz. In 1806 he commenced a war with Turkey, which lasted until 1812. Its result was the Treaty of Bucharest and the annexation to Russia of the province of Bessarabia, the strip of territory lying between the Dniester and the Pruth. During 1806 Russia had to enter into a closer grapple with the new autocrat of Europe. Napoleon had shattered the military power of Austria and of Prussia, and after Jena the tide of war rolled towards the frontiers of Russia. Three bloody and stoutly-contested battles between the French and the Russians,—Pultusk (December, 1806), Eylau (February, 1807), and Friedland (June, 1807)—all fought in the same

district, the neighbourhood of Königsburgh, proved that Napoleon was meeting with a stern and tenacious resistance. The French claim all three of these battles as victories, but in the two first the French eagles were undoubtedly checked. Eylau was a Russian victory, but at Friedland Napoleon was triumphant. The famous Treaty of Tilsit was signed upon a raft on the river Niemen, where the descendant of Rurik met and fraternised with the Corsican soldier of fortune.

Alexander, in furtherance of the projects of his new alliance, made war with England and Sweden. He reaped his harvest from the latter power, seizing the whole of her remaining possessions in Finland, together with East Bothnia and Aland, and these acquisitions were confirmed to Russia by the Treaty of Frederiksham (1809). Against England Alexander was less successful. He sent a fleet to assist Napoleon on the Portuguese coast, which fleet was captured by the British. His efforts to carry out Napoleon's system of the continental blockade against English commerce caused much misery to his subjects, by depriving them of their best market for their exportable produce. The alliance with France became as irksome to Alexander as it was unpopular with his people. Very soon the rigorous maintenance of this blockade became impossible; hence mutual recriminations between the allies. Each prepared for a mortal duel.

Russia made peace with Turkey, England, and Sweden. In May, 1812, Napoleon declared war

against Alexander, and the "Grande Armée" marched for the Russian frontier. Besides the French troops, there were Austrians, Prussians, Germans of various principalities, Poles, Italians, Dutchmen, and Spaniards, all marching under the orders of the great leader. The vast array numbered over half a million of men; a recent French writer, Rainaud, gives the roll-call as 678,000. Upon his arrival in Poland, Napoleon was received with great enthusiasm, but his innate selfishness caused him to miss the most splendid opportunity of consolidating his empire. Had he then constituted a great and powerful kingdom of Poland, he would probably have erected in central Europe such a buttress for his political power as might have assured him against any future European coalitions. His enormous host had hardly become engaged in the swamps and forests of Lithuania when symptoms of disorganisation became apparent. The Russians retired before him, removing or destroying all provisions and forage; nevertheless, several partial engagements took place as the French armies marched from Wilna and from Mohilev towards Smolensk. At Smolensk there was severe fighting. The French armies wasted away as they advanced, partly from slaughter, partly from disease and scarcity of provisions, whilst the ubiquitous Cossacks swarmed around their flanks and rear, harassed them on the march, and intercepted their convoys. Smolensk was burned, and the French pursued their march towards Moscow.

At Borodino the Russians stood at bay, and

disputed the passage. On the 7th September, 1812, after several days' preliminary skirmishing, was fought the great battle of Borodino, or of the Moskova. It resulted in a victory for Napoleon, inasmuch as it left open to him the road to Moscow, but it was bought at such a cost as to cripple his army, and render it inadequate for the gigantic task which he had undertaken. It is recorded that 30,000 of the French army and 40,000 Russians were left on the field. At every day's march Napoleon's difficulties increased, and his communications became more disorganised. On the 14th September he entered Moscow, hoping to establish himself there and await reinforcements.

But the turning-point of his career had been passed. Two days after his arrival Moscow was in flames, and nearly the whole of the city was destroyed. The French army stayed for five weeks within the walls; they lacked everything—shelter, provisions, forage—and the winter season was fast approaching. On the 19th October Moscow was evacuated; the "Grande Armée" was reduced by this time to 120,000 men. The retreat was a continued series of horrible catastrophes. The winter set in early, and with unusual severity. Napoleon, with his diminishing and famished troops, fought his way through the ever-increasing hosts of the Russians. By the middle of November he had passed through Smolensk, his army reduced to 40,000 combatants. On the banks of the Beresina the Russians awaited him, and finally crushed all that remained of the

"Grande Armée" as an aggressive force. The massacre of those terrible days, 26th and 27th of November, has been described too frequently to require repetition: the Russian artillery playing upon crowds of fugitives crossing the river upon two narrow bridges, one of which gave way beneath the mass of human suffering, and precipitated it into the ice-encumbered river. Napoleon, abandoning to their fate the small residue of that magnificent army which had followed him across the Niemen five months before, set out for Paris, where he arrived on the 18th December, and immediately commenced raising fresh levies of men from the almost exhausted male population of his empire.

But the whole of Europe rose against him. During the campaign of 1813 the Russians took a prominent part, and at the battle of Leipsic the Emperor Alexander displayed signal marks of valour under the fire of the enemy. This great battle, called the Battle of the Nations, lasted four days—16th to 19th October. Russians, Austrians, Prussians, and Swedes were arrayed against the French, who were abandoned by their forced allies, the Saxons. The defeat of Napoleon was overwhelming, and the allies pursued him into France. His last campaign in the defence of French soil was perhaps the most brilliant of all his strategical achievements; but he was driven back from province to province, until the allies entered Paris, the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia at their head. In the meantime the English, under Wellington, drove the French out of the

Iberian peninsula, followed them into France, and finally defeated Marshal Soult at Toulouse, on 10th April, 1814. Napoleon abdicated on the 4th April, and was removed to Elba.

After the hundred days, and the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, in which battle the Russians did not take part, Alexander and his army again entered Paris. At the Congress of Vienna a larger share of Poland was accorded to Russia, and her conquest of Finland was confirmed, Sweden being recompensed by the annexation of Norway, which had hitherto belonged to Denmark.

Russia emerged from the desperate contest with a military and political position so greatly enhanced as to give her almost a preponderance in the councils of Europe.

During this great European struggle, a war, languidly conducted, had continued between Russia and Persia from 1804 to 1813. Its result was the surrender by Persia to Russia of all claims over Georgia and nearly the whole of the Caucasian provinces.

At the commencement of his reign Alexander evinced those liberal tendencies which were, no doubt, the true bent of his nature; and, amongst other reforms, he took some steps towards preparing the way for the emancipation of the serfs. But the latter part of his life was embittered by doubts and suspicions; the machinations of secret societies shook his faith in political progress, and he began to believe that his subjects were ungrateful for

the services which he had rendered to them and to Europe.

He died at Taganrog, on the Sea of Azof, in 1825.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS TO THE PRESENT TIME, 1825-1882.

Renunciation by the Grand Duke Constantine Accession of *Nicholas*—Military Riots—War with Persia—The Sultan Mahmoud II.—War with Turkey—Treaty of Adrianople—Insurrection in Poland—*Nicholas* assists Mahmoud against Mehemet Ali—Treaty of Hunkiar Iskelessi—*Nicholas* assists the Emperor of Austria against the Hungarians—The Crimean War—Campaigns in Europe and Asia—Austrian Occupation of the Principalities—Siege of Sebastopol—Death of *Nicholas*—*Alexander II.*—Peace with the Western Powers and Turkey—Treaty of Paris—Emancipation of the Serfs—Subjugation of the Caucasus—Extension of Dominion in Asia—The Bulgarian Atrocities—War with Turkey—Campaign in Asia—Advance across the Danube—Siege of Plevna—Treaty of San Stefano—Congress and Treaty of Berlin—Dismemberment of Turkey—Assassination of the Emperor Accession of *Alexander III.*

UPON the death of Alexander I. it was most commonly supposed that his eldest surviving brother, Constantine, who was at that time at Warsaw, would succeed to the throne, and the third brother, the Grand Duke Nicholas, who was then at St. Petersburg, took the oath of allegiance to Constantine.

But the Empress-Mother Maria, and the Prince Alexander Galitzin, declared that, by the command of the late emperor, and in accordance with an act of renunciation on the part of the Grand Duke Constantine, the throne devolved to Nicholas.

Nicholas, however, refused the crown until the act of renunciation was confirmed by Constantine, who again formally relinquished his rights of succession in favour of Nicholas and his heirs. A formidable military conspiracy broke out, and *Nicholas I.* mounted the throne amidst the thunder of the cannon with which he crushed in the streets of St. Petersburg the armed resistance to his accession.

The reign of Nicholas was sternly reactionary. All liberal tendencies in politics were discouraged and repressed, and the Tsar was evidently conscientiously persuaded that it was his primary duty to become the foe of revolution, both at home and abroad.

In 1826 Nicholas was at war with Persia, from whom he obtained the cession of Erivan and Nahituvan.

At this time the throne of Turkey was occupied by one of the ablest, the most manly, and the most energetic of the princes of the race of Othman who had appeared during several generations. The Sultan Mahmoud II. was, like Peter the Great, a reformer both of the army and of the civil administration. But Mahmoud's good fortune was not equal to that of Peter, and a series of disasters destroyed what was

probably the last opportunity which Time, the remover of decaying organisms, could afford for the revival of the vital powers of the Turkish empire.

A great insurrection had broken out in Greece, but was gradually being subdued. It was impossible for the great powers of Europe to remain deaf to the cry of despair which arose from the Greeks, amidst the atrocities which appear to be inseparable from the dealings of Turkey with revolted subjects. The remonstrances of England, France, and Russia were backed up by the appearance in Turkish waters of a combined squadron of the ships of the three nations. The stubbornness of the Turks and the obstinacy of their admirals led to the naval battle of Navarino, in which the fleets of the allies entirely destroyed the navies of Turkey and Egypt (20th October, 1827). The insurrection spread, and, by the intervention of the powers, a part of Greece was erected into a separate kingdom in 1829.

Meantime, in 1828, the Emperor Nicholas declared war against Turkey. The Russians at first sustained heavy losses in Europe, although more successful in Asia, and Moltke has pronounced the results of the first year's campaign to have been extremely doubtful. But in the second year the fate of the war was decided by the audacious genius of the Russian General Diebitch, who, with a comparatively small force, and almost in the presence of superior armies of the Turks, broke through the passes of the Balkan Mountains and seized Adrianople. All was

consternation at Constantinople, where the Sultan was quite unaware of the weakness of the invading forces. From the head-quarters of his small army, enfeebled as it was by the ravages of dysentery and plague, Diebitch dictated terms of peace to the Porte. By the Treaty of Adrianople Russia gained three fortresses and an extension of territory on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, a further strip of territory on the left bank of the Danube, and the protectorate over the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.

An insurrection of the Poles in 1830-1 was extinguished with much bloodshed, and the separate constitution which had been granted to Poland by the Treaty of Vienna was suppressed.

The Sultan Mahmoud had in the meantime been contending with a series of insurrections in various parts of his dominions, the most formidable of which, that of Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt, threatened to subvert his throne and dynasty. In his extremity, Mahmoud applied for help to his old enemy, Russia. A Russian fleet was immediately despatched to his assistance, in February, 1833, and 18,000 Russian troops were landed near the mouth of the Bosphorus. The triumphant advance upon Constantinople of Ibrahim Pasha, the able son and general of Mehemet Ali, was arrested, and a compulsory reconciliation was negotiated by the great powers between the Sultan and his too-powerful vassal. The price paid to Russia for this timely aid was the Treaty of Hunkiar Iskelessi, by which Turkey engaged that, whenever so requested

by the Tsars, she would close the Straits of the Dardanelles against the armed vessels of all nations *except those of Russia.*

In 1848 a wave of revolution broke over Europe, beginning with the dethronement of Louis Philippe, and spreading through Italy, Prussia, Austria, and Hungary. In 1849 the Emperor Nicholas assisted the Emperor of Austria with a powerful army, and entirely crushed the revolutionary forces in Hungary, which country had declared its independence. Russian politicians complain that Austria has shown herself ungrateful for this assistance.

In the year 1853 an apparently insignificant quarrel between the priests of the Greek and Latin rites, respecting the keys of a church at Bethlehem, resulted in the great war which is known in history as the Crimean war. The conduct of the Porte had been prudent and conciliatory, and she had done all in her power to reconcile the conflicting pretensions. But when Russia demanded the exclusive position of a protectorate over all the Christians of the Turkish empire, the Sultan refused so extravagant a claim. The Russian ambassador thereupon abruptly left Constantinople, and, in the month of July, Nicholas sent his armies across the Pruth, and took possession of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia as a "material guarantee."

The Sultan demanded the withdrawal of the Russian troops, and, upon being refused, declared war against Russia on the 1st October. The war commenced with Turkish successes, the Turks crossing

the Danube, and gaining victories over the Russians at Oltenitza and Citate.

That the attack upon Turkey was premeditated by Nicholas is proved by his conversations with Sir Hamilton Seymour, the English ambassador at St. Petersburg; and although the English Cabinet promptly declined all participation in arrangements for dividing the "sick man's" inheritance, they have been accused of "drifting into a war" from a want of proper firmness in not giving the Russian emperor timely warning as to what would be considered by England a *casus belli*.

Since the Turks had first "encamped in Europe," they had been most commonly regarded as the enemies of Christendom. They had been incessantly engaged in subjecting by brute force province after province of Christian Europe, until the sloth and incapacity of their Sultans had allowed the whole machinery of government to fall into decay; thereafter the Christian nations had been as incessantly engaged in wresting back again province after province from their dominion. The French had, indeed, since the time of Louis XIV., coquetted with Turkey whenever they required an ally to create a diversion in the course of their wars with Austria or with Russia, but no power had ever yet interfered to prevent the dominions of the Sultan from being dismembered. The "integrity of the Turkish empire" was a new doctrine, and it is believed by many that the Tsar was not made aware that by attacking Turkey he would incur the hostility of the western powers, or

at all events of England, until he had gone too far to retreat.

In the month of September, 1853, the English and French fleets anchored in Besika Bay. In November the complete destruction of the small Turkish fleet at Sinope by a powerful Russian squadron greatly excited public feeling in England. The combined fleets entered the Black Sea, and in March, 1854, war with Russia was declared by both England and France. The Russians were repulsed by the Turks at Silistria, and recrossed the Danube, when Austria, without declaring war, announced her intention of occupying Moldavia and Wallachia. The Russian troops made way for the Austrian army, which continued to hold the principalities until after the termination of the war.

The Austrian occupation put an end to the fighting in European Turkey, but the war between the Turks and the Russians was carried on with varying success in the Asiatic border provinces. The western powers, after some military demonstrations at Gallipoli, at Varna, and in the Dobrudscha, undertook the invasion of the Crimea, assisted by a small army from the little state of Sardinia, and by a contingent of Turkish troops. Their objective was Sebastopol, the great arsenal and dockyard of the Russians in the Black Sea. A landing was effected at Eupatoria, and after the victory of the Alma, on the 20th September, 1854, the allies proceeded to besiege Sebastopol. Their fleets gave them the command of the Black Sea, the Russian fleet having been driven into the

harbour of Sebastopol, where it was sunk, in order to prevent its capture.

The siege was of a character without precedent in history. At first the defences of the city were so incomplete that it is now believed that it could have been carried by a *coup de main* if it had been attacked immediately after the battle of the Alma. If so, the opportunity was lost. The genius of General Todleben supplemented the fortifications by improvised earthworks, which long resisted the attacks of the allies, and the success of these earthworks inaugurated a new system of defensive warfare.

The besieging armies were not sufficient in numbers to invest the city, and Sebastopol continued to receive supplies and reinforcements by land. The anomaly was witnessed of a city being besieged by armies smaller in number than the army of defence. The siege lasted for nearly twelve months, during which several pitched battles were fought outside the walls by the contending hosts. The battles of Balaclava (25th October, 1854), Inkerman (5th November), and Eupatoria (17th February, 1855), will long linger in the memories of the English people.

The British nation, who watched the struggle with intense interest, became aware, with grief and shame, that our military administration was inefficient, and that our brave soldiers were exposed not only to the fire of the enemy, and the effects of a severe winter in a rigorous climate, but that their sufferings were increased and intensified by the collapse of the commissariat and transport service. The abundant

stores supplied by a wealthy and generous nation were not made adequately available for the needs of our suffering troops, and the word "Balaclava" became a synonym for wasteful and incompetent confusion.

The storm of indignation which had been gathering in England broke upon the heads of the Ministry upon the meeting of Parliament in the spring of 1855. The "Ministry of all the talents" was swept away, and Lord Palmerston was entrusted with the administration.

On the Russian side, the Emperor was bitterly disappointed at the check which his policy had received, and mortified at the fact that all his mighty hosts could not succeed in expelling the small army which braved him in a corner of his empire where he most desired to maintain his prestige. The resources of Russia were strained to the uttermost in keeping up continual reinforcements of troops and supplies, not only to the Crimea, but also to every point where the ubiquitous fleets of England and France threatened a vulnerable joint in the armour of that vast empire. Odessa and the Baltic ports were blockaded. The export commerce of Russia, on which she is so largely dependent, was almost entirely suspended.

On the 2nd March, 1855, the Emperor Nicholas breathed his last, succumbing, it is believed, to the effects of mental anxiety as much as to the rigours of a severe winter which he had imprudently encountered.

He was succeeded by his eldest son, *Alexander II.*, soon after whose accession negotiations for peace were commenced, which did not come to a fruitful issue until

nearly twelve months later. In the meantime the siege of Sebastopol was pushed on with vigour, and on the 9th September the great fortress was stormed by the allies. In Asia, the city of Kars fell before the Russian arms on the 29th September, after a tenacious and gallant resistance with which the name of Fenwick Williams will be for ever associated. The war was ended by the Treaty of Paris (30th March, 1856). By this Treaty, Russia gave up Bessarabia, and all right to a protectorate over Moldavia and Wallachia, which principalities were for the future to elect their own hospodars under the suzerainty of the Porte. Russia likewise consented to the neutralisation of the Black Sea, by which she was precluded from having arsenals on its shores, whilst neither Russia nor Turkey were to have warlike navies upon its waters. The fortifications of Sebastopol were destroyed.

The name of Alexander II. has been rendered illustrious by an act surpassing in grandeur the achievements of most of the sovereigns whose deeds have been recorded in history. In 1861 all the serfs throughout the empire were liberated. It is the fashion amongst extreme democrats to call this emancipation a sham. This assertion is as unfair as it is inexact. The liberation of the serfs is a great and beneficent reality, accomplished at a considerable sacrifice of the interests of the higher classes for the good of the mass of the population.*

* For details respecting the village Mir, and the emancipation of the serfs, *vide* chap. ii.

The emancipation edicts were followed by the establishment of elective district assemblies for the management of local interests. In 1863 the brutal punishment of the knout was finally abolished.

The subjugation of the warlike tribes of the Caucasus had engaged the unceasing efforts of the Emperor Nicholas; it was completely accomplished by Alexander II., and one of the greatest obstacles to the extension of Russian power in Asia was thus removed. The annexation of fresh territory in Asia, which had been previously extensive, was now proceeded with by still more rapid strides. The Russian boundary in 1836 did not touch the eastern coast of the Caspian, and was far north of the Sea of Aral. At the present time the whole eastern coast of the Caspian belongs to Russia; the Sea of Aral is entirely a Russian lake, whilst to the east the frontier touches Khiva and Bokhara, and embraces Khokand.* The more recent subjugation of the Tekke Turcomans and the annexation of the oasis of the Akhel Tekkes, brings the Russian outposts within a measurable distance of Merv, on the direct strategic route to Herat and Candahar.

In 1870 Russia formally announced to Europe that she should no longer consider as binding upon her the clause in the Treaty of Paris which prevented her from possessing fleets and arsenals on the Black Sea.

The incidents connected with the last war between

* Capt. Burnaby's "Ride to Khiva," and the maps which accompany it.

Russia and Turkey must be fresh in the memory of my readers. In the summer of 1875 an insurrection against the Turkish rule broke out in Herzegovina, and spread to the neighbouring provinces. After some months' delay, the principalities of Servia and Montenegro, who had been assisting the insurgents, declared war against Turkey. The Servians were being worsted in the struggle, spite of the aid of a large number of Russian volunteers, when in May, 1876, occurred the horrible massacres by the Turks of an unarmed Christian population of men, women, and children which received the name of the "Bulgarian atrocities."

The news of these atrocities caused an immense excitement in England. In Russia this feeling was intensified by the affinities of race and creed. The details were so ghastly, and revealed such a deplorable condition of barbarous misgovernment, that energetic representations were addressed to the Porte by all the great powers, and a Conference assembled at Constantinople, at which England, Russia, France, Germany, Austria, and Italy were represented.

After many meetings with the Turkish Ministers, the Conference finally agreed with unanimity upon conditions of reform and concessions to the Christian populations. The Porte promptly, and with little ceremony, on the 20th January, 1877, rejected these proposals, whereupon the great powers recalled their ambassadors. A protocol, signed in London on the 31st March by all the powers, met with the same rejection by the Sultan.

It is believed that the Emperor Alexander had been sincerely desirous to avert hostilities, but the national feeling in Russia became too strong for further resistance on the part of the sovereign. On the 24th April Russia declared war with the Porte, and hostilities at once commenced on the Asiatic frontier. In Europe the Russians made a convention with Roumania, which Principality declared its independence of Turkey, and in June the Russians crossed the Danube and entered Bulgaria, where the Tsar in person joined the army. The Turks neither resisted the occupation of Roumania, nor did they effectually oppose the passage of the Danube, and by the end of July a small Russian force had actually crossed the Balkans. But the aspect of the campaign was changed for a time by the energy of Osman Pasha, who, after inflicting a repulse upon General Krudener, threw himself into Plevna, an open town, which he rapidly intrenched, and held against the invading armies. The Russian advance was stopped, and the force beyond the Balkans receded, and intrenched itself in the Shipka Pass, where it was besieged by the Turks. For nearly five months the struggle continued on these lines, the Russians and Roumanians hurling continued attacks upon Plevna, which not even the heroism of General Skobeleff could render successful against the gallant resistance of Osman. Finally, the place was completely invested, Osman's provisions were exhausted, and on the 10th December he attempted to break his way through the lines of the enemy, but was overwhelmed and forced to capitulate

with his 30,000 men, he himself being wounded in the action. A force of 80,000 Russians and Roumanians was now set at liberty; the Balkans were broken through, and the road to Constantinople was open. In the meantime, the war in Asia, after many vicissitudes, had resulted also in favour of the Russians; Mukthar Pasha had been defeated, Ardahan and Kars had fallen, and Erzeroum was invested.

In Europe, the Russians on the 3rd January took Sofia, and advanced until they were close to Gallipoli. The British fleet, which had been for some time at Besika Bay, entered the Dardanelles on the 25th. About the same time an armistice was signed between the Russians and the Turks, which led to the Treaty of San Stefano, signed in the month of March.

This treaty was not satisfactory to the other powers of Europe. It would have created a large and powerful state, under Slavonic influence, with extensive coast lines on the Euxine and the Ægean, and extending to within a close proximity to the Adriatic; and it was argued that such an arrangement would be fatal to the development of the other races of the Balkan peninsula, and more especially so to the Greek nation. An insurrection of the Greek population broke out in Thessaly, whilst, as measures of precaution, the English Government called out the reserves and brought Indian troops to garrison Malta.

Fortunately the points at issue were amicably settled by a Congress of the great powers, which met

at Berlin. The Treaty of San Stefano was superseded, with the consent of Russia, by the Treaty of Berlin, which was signed on the 13th July, 1878. Russia recovered the province of Bessarabia, which she had ceded by the Treaty of Paris, compensation being given to Roumania by a cession of territory in the Dobrudscha, at the expense of Turkey. Russia likewise received an important accession of territory in Armenia, including Kars and Batoum. Roumania was declared independent of Turkey, and its prince has subsequently (1881) assumed the rank of king, under the title of Charles I.

Servia was also declared independent, and received from Turkey an addition of about 4,250 square miles, with a population of 316,000 souls.* Recently this State has followed the example of Roumania, its prince having taken the title of King Milan I. Austria took possession of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a territory of 24,247 square miles and a population of 1,212,000.

Two fresh principalities were created. *Bulgaria*, north of the Balkans, has an hereditary prince, subject to the suzerainty of the Porte, with an area of 24,360 square miles, and a population of 1,859,000. *Eastern Roumelia*, south of the Balkans, is now an autonomous province, with a Christian governor-general appointed by the Sultan, with 13,500 square miles of territory, and 817,000 souls.

By a separate convention, England, with the con-

* These and the following numbers are quoted from the "Statesman's Year Book."

sent of the Porte, took possession of the island of Cyprus. The recommendations of the Congress as regards Montenegro and Greece were not carried out without considerable modifications, nor until after extreme pressure had been brought to bear upon the Porte. The fleets of the great powers made a demonstration at Dulcigno, and the Greek army was mobilised. Recently these two questions have also been arranged, and both Montenegro and Greece have received additions to their territories.

As direct consequences of this war, Turkey, in addition to her losses in Asia, has been deprived of more than half of her European possessions.

The crime of the 13th March, 1881, deprived Russia of one of the most amiable and well-meaning of all her long line of sovereigns, whose influence had been most potent in promoting her welfare and progress. It is known that he had just given his approval to fresh measures of constitutional reform, which his death prevented from being carried into execution. It is probable that Alexander II., the emancipator of the serfs, and the victim of a political sect which does not represent the great voice of the nation, will be regarded by posterity as a martyr to the cause of the people. Of his present Majesty, Alexander III., may it be permitted to record the hope that he may be enabled largely to promote the happiness and prosperity of his vast empire, and to maintain friendly and cordial relations with the whole brotherhood of civilised nations.

CHAPTER XII.

PRESENT POSITION OF THE EMPIRE, AND DESCRIPTION
OF ITS COMPONENT ELEMENTS.

Extent of Territory—Diversity of Races and Sympathies—Population—"Great Russia," the Centre of Gravity of the Empire—Its Extent—Homogeneity of its Population—Its Political Sympathies—The Nihilists—Religion of the Great Russians—Origin of the Race—Little Russians—White Russians—Annexations by the various Sovereigns from Ivan the Great to Alexander II.

THE present condition of the Russian empire is so vast a subject that in a slight sketch like the present one it is necessary to confine the description to the most clearly-marked lines, without attempting to enter into too much detail; and I cannot too strongly recommend my kind reader to look at a map of the eastern hemisphere before he attempts to follow me.

There it lies before you, this great empire, in one unbroken continuity of territory from the Baltic to the Pacific. It occupies the whole of northern Europe and northern Asia, with the single exception of the Scandinavian peninsula. Its various shores are washed by the Arctic Ocean, the Baltic, the Black Sea, the Caspian, the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk, and the Behring Straits. In order to realise the great extent of that portion of the globe over which stretches the sceptre of the

Tsars, it is well to remember that an overland route from England to America *viâ* Russia, with only seventy miles of intervening sea-passage (twenty at Calais and fifty at Behring's Straits) is geographically possible, and by no means impracticable to hardy travellers.

As you contemplate its magnitude, it dwarfs by comparison of bulk all the other empires of the world, whether ancient or modern. According to recent estimates its area embraces over $8\frac{1}{4}$ million square miles, being one-seventh part of the land of the whole globe, or one twenty-sixth part of its whole surface, land and water included.* Slavonic in its origin, it has acquired territory at the expense of every nationality with whose borders its own are at present conterminous—from Swedes, Lapps and Finns, Esthonians, Livonians, Germans, Poles and Czechs, Cossacks, Bulgarians and Roumanians, Persians, Turks, Tartars, Turcomans, Chinese, and savage tribes innumerable. From all these nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and peoples has territory been taken to swell this vast empire. Its present population, although enormous in the aggregate, amounting to 85,426,142 souls, is not in proportion to its area; but it possesses in central Asia and elsewhere enormous tracts of country which, although at present depopulated, did at one time support large populations, and which are capable of being again settled, whilst in Siberia there are many large districts with soil sufficiently fertile to invite an extensive system of colonisation. And in order to

* "Statesman's Year Book" for 1881.

estimate the future of Russia, it is necessary to remember that the Russian Slavs are a colonising race *within their own borders*.

There is scarcely a topic connected with Russia on which the most diverse theories are not continually broached. It is said, on the one hand, that the Russians are united and homogeneous, on the other, that they are a chaos of discordant nationalities, holding antagonistic opinions, social, political, and religious, which must break to pieces from utter want of principles of cohesion. Let us try to occupy some solid central ground, where our judgment may not be washed away by these eddying currents of opinion.

The Russian empire of to-day contains Russians by race and sentiment, and races which are only Russian by annexation. But the Russian element was energetic enough to form, and will probably be able to maintain, the empire ; it possesses considerable powers of assimilation, and force enough to control the other races. What, then, is this element of nationality, and where is its centre of gravity? It is to be found in what is called "*Great Russia*."

I am not about to enter into a discussion as to the origin of races. Ethnographical maps have abounded of late years, and they vary most notably, according to the political opinions of their authors.

But I agree partially with Mr. W. Hepworth Dixon that the centre of gravity of Russian nationality is contained within the area between Smolensk and Viatka on the one side, and from the Gulf of Onega

to the Cossack country of the Don on the other. But instead of calling it, as he does, the Russia of Ivan the Terrible, I would prefer calling it the Russia of Ivan the Great before he conquered Kazan, and adding thereto the district of Smolensk. It does not extend either to the Baltic or the Black Sea. Within this area live the Russians of the Russians. They are people speaking the same tongue, possessing a common history and tradition, and they have been welded together by long centuries of suffering and foreign oppression, until delivered by the princes of Moscovy from the Tartars and formed into a nation. In Russia exists the only survival in Europe of a purely autocratic form of government. Indeed, it is doubtful if there ever prevailed in Europe another example of an autocracy so unlimited as that which is wielded by the Tsars of all the Russias. Neither is that authority overshadowed or diminished, as has been so often the case in other countries, by the influence of a powerful aristocracy. The political influence of the nobles, as such, is not important; the voice of a noble is not potential in the state unless he is also a Government official. Under the Emperor is a vast hierarchy of officials, forming a separate and powerful class in the community. They are called "Tchinovniks" because they are divided into a number of graduated classes called "Tchins." It is by their promotion from one "Tchin" to another that they become eligible for appointment to more important offices in the state.

It can hardly be doubted, speaking of the purely Russian part of the empire, that the agricultural

population—the great mass of the people—is docile to the Government. They know little, and they care less, about abstract politics; but they know that they were recently serfs, and that the Tsar Alexander II. liberated them. If they were endowed with universal suffrage to-morrow, they would probably vote *en masse* for the men whom they thought most likely to obey the commands of the Tsar.

And, in Poland, since the emancipation edicts, it must not be forgotten that the great majority of the nation have the same paramount reason for preferring the rule of the present Tsars to the former liberty of Poland, which meant unbridled independence for the nobles, degrading slavery for the peasant.

In the large towns political excitement is more rife, but it is probable that subversive ideas are entertained by only a small minority even of the urban population. There is a large and respectable party in favour of the gradual introduction of liberal measures; many amongst them, however, think it wisest to develop wherever possible the germs of old Slavonic institutions, rather than in all cases to favour the transplantation to Russian soil of the growths of western democracy.

Respecting the Nihilists, I crave permission to say but little, as I know nothing of them except what they are pleased to let the outside world know by their published creed and by their doings. The secret leaders of the party can scarcely expect that educated thinkers will believe this published creed—the creed of Bakunin—to be more than a menace; for it

cannot be a belief. Condensed, that creed is, "No law! no religion! Nihil! There are two lies, God and Right, which are to be torn out of the human heart: God, invented by the priest, and Right, a fiction invented by Might. Freed from these, the binding chains called science, civilisation, property, marriage, morality, and justice will snap aside like threads. Your existence, and that of the surrounding world, is due to the conglomeration of atoms, in accordance with the laws of gravity and attraction. Let your happiness be your only law. You must destroy everything which exists in the shape of state or social organisation."*

Judging, then, from this creed, it would be useless to consider the Nihilists according to the usually accepted notions of morality, justice, or civilisation. These notions are to them anathema! But it may be at least permitted to us to remark that this creed is almost entirely pure dogmatism from beginning to end. Its triumph would be accompanied by a survival of the fittest in the shape of brute force alone, as its success would necessarily require such a moral atmosphere as would destroy all the other restraining forces by which the existence of mankind in communities is rendered tolerable or even possible.

The Nihilists are generally believed to be a very small body, but extremely well organised, and well supplied with money, which they must use lavishly. The revival of the system of political assassination,

* Manifesto of Bakunin in 1868. "O. K.," "Russia and England," p. 256.

or, if they will, the infliction of capital punishment for divergence of political opinion, more especially where the punishment is inflicted by a secret tribunal, is a stumbling-block to the lover of liberty. On the subject of the popular estimation in which the Nihilists are held, Russians are probably the best authorities. The lady who writes under the initials "O. K." believes that they are utterly abhorred by the great mass of the people.

In religion the population of Great Russia is held together by a tie of no ordinary character. They are, as a rule, a devout people, according to their lights, and this light is derived from the tenets and teaching of the Greek Church. The Russian national feeling is intensified as regards resistance to the ideas of western Europe by this common adherence to the rites of the Eastern Church.

But amongst themselves this belief is accompanied by wide divergences of practice. Side by side with the conformers to the Established National Church are great masses of nonconformists.

The greater proportion of these dissenters are designated by the term of *Raskolniks* or dissidents, otherwise *Starowierzi*, or Old Believers. Their separation from the Established Church may be dated from the reign of the Tsar Alexis, when the Patriarch Nikon revised the translations of the Bible and the Church Service, and introduced certain innovations in the ceremonies of the Church. The alterations in themselves appear to have been sensible, and consisted principally in the removal of corruptions and in

reverting to an older and purer tradition. But Nikon was a man of overbearing disposition, and, backed by the authority of the Tsar, he introduced his reforms with so little discretion that great numbers of the devout took the alarm, and refused to adopt the new ways, which they considered to be heretical. Their alarm was further increased by the violent changes introduced by Peter the Great, and they believed that Antichrist was come, and that the apostolic succession in the Greek Church was lost. The descendants of these dissenters are counted by millions; some say that they amount, as secret or avowed dissenters, to nearly one half of the whole body of the Russian Church. They may be classified in two divisions—those who have no priests, because they believe that the true succession from the apostles is lost, and those who have accepted priests ordained by bishops of the Greek Church from outside of the realm of Russia. These dissenters are now tolerated, but in former times they have often been persecuted with great severity.

Besides these dissidents, there is a great number of sects of smaller importance as regards numbers; most of them harmless enthusiasts, but some of them of a fanaticism dangerous to public morals, and who are accordingly treated with more or less severity by the Government. For a detailed description of the different sects of Russian dissenters, let me refer to the works of Mr. Wallace and Mr. W. Hepworth Dixon.*

Such are some of the characteristics of that part

* Wallace's "Russia." W. Hepworth Dixon, "Free Russia," vol. i.

of the population called Great Russians. They are not of unmixed Slavonic race, but are the result of continued migrations, eastward and northward, of a population moving from the neighbourhood of Novgorod, and mixing with and absorbing thinly-scattered tribes of Finnish or Touranian origin. The Great Russians number from 38 to 40 millions, out of the 85 millions of Russian subjects. In their immediate neighbourhood are from 15 to 16 millions of Ruthenians, or Little Russians, more purely Slavonic than the Great Russians, but denationalised during several ages, from having been conquered and annexed to Lithuania or Poland. To these, add from 3 to 4 millions of the inhabitants of White Russia, or Belorussians, of the neighbourhood of Minsk, Grodno, &c., and we have a total of 60 millions of souls, who are not only Russian subjects but actually Russians.

It is around this nucleus, which is sufficiently compact in race, language, religion, and common traditions to form a homogeneous nationality, that the other very numerous and heterogeneous elements of the Russian empire have been agglomerated.

During the long period of their humiliation and servitude, the Russians could spread only to the north. Europe up to the Arctic Sea was theirs, but on the west, and the south, and the east they were hemmed in by barriers of steel. But so soon as the Tartars were overthrown, and the national unity accomplished, from that moment the expansion of territory began, and it has never ceased until the present day.*

* Vide map at end of book.

Ivan the Great and Ivan the Terrible conquered and annexed the khanates of Kazan and Astrachan, thus adding the first instalment of Tartar subjects to Russia, and obtaining the first foothold upon the Caspian. The latter Tsar also made the first inroad upon Siberia.

Feodor and Boris Godounoff largely increased the Siberian territory, the former bringing it south of the 50th degree of latitude, and the latter carrying it up to the Arctic circle.

Michael Romanoff added a district along the banks of the Ural River, with a further coast line on the north of the Caspian: also a vast expanse of north-western Asia, extending from the Yenisei River to Behring's Straits, and the Sea of Okhotsk.

Alexis annexed Little Russia; and the Cossacks of the Ukraine, under their Hetman, Bagdan Khmelintzky, voluntarily placed themselves and their territory under his sceptre.

Up to this time Russia had no sea-board, either on the Baltic or the Black Sea. Peter the Great conquered a Baltic coast-line, comprising the provinces of Viborg, Ingria, Esthonia, Livonia, and the islands of Dago and Osel, with their indigenous tribes, and an added German population, part Lutherans, part Roman Catholics. These provinces have given to Russia some of her ablest generals and administrators. In Asia, Peter added all the northern shore of the Sea of Okhotsk, and the peninsula of Kamschatka.

The Empress Anna took from Turkey a district between the Dnieper and the Bug, in the neighbour-

hood of Kherson. In her reign, three hordes of Kirghiz Tartars joined the empire, bringing two fresh belts of territory—one on the shores of the Caspian, and the other in central Asia.

The Empress Elizabeth took from Sweden a slice of Finland.

Catherine II. took from Turkey the Crimean peninsula and the whole of the shores surrounding the Sea of Azof. She also, at the expense of Turkey, advanced the Russian frontier to the banks of the Dniester. Upon the partition of Poland, she took the lion's share of the territory, including the grand duchy of Courland, giving Russia a further extension of sea-board on the Baltic. Courland brought into the empire a population of which the majority are Protestants, the peasants being principally Letts or Esthonians, whilst the landed proprietors are of German race. The other provinces taken from Poland included parts of Lithuania wrested from Russia during the time of her weakness, but the larger part of the Polish territory was inhabited by a race who, although of Slavonic origin, were Roman Catholic in creed, speaking a separate language, and hostile to Russian influences and traditions. Catherine's annexations form a broad, continuous belt of territory stretching across the whole of Europe, from the Baltic at Libau to the Black Sea at Odessa.

Paul I. annexed the province of Georgia, between the Black Sea and the Caspian.

Alexander I. took from Sweden the whole of the

remainder of Finland. At the Treaty of Vienna he obtained a further extension of territory in Poland. From Turkey he took a fresh slip of land beyond the Dniester—the province of Bessarabia. On the Caspian he annexed additional portions of the coast provinces, both on the eastern and the western shores. In central Asia he occupied a large additional tract of country from the Sea of Aral to Lake Balkhash.

Nicholas took from Persia the provinces of Erivan and Nabituvan in Trans-Caucasia, and from Turkey nearly all that remained to that power of the eastern coast of the Black Sea. After the Crimean war he ceded the Danubian province of Bessarabia to the new state which is now called Roumania.

Alexander II. took back this strip of territory, for which, under the Treaty of Berlin, Roumania received compensation in the Dobrudscha at the expense of Turkey. By the same treaty, Alexander obtained from Turkey the districts of Kars and Batoum, including a further stretch of coast-line on the Black Sea. On the Caspian he annexed a large province stretching from that sea to the Sea of Aral, and absorbing all the remainder of the eastern coast of the Caspian. Further to the east, he inaugurated a new departure in central Asia, enclosing the Sea of Aral and Lake Balkhash, making the Sir Daria a Russian river, absorbing Khokand, and bringing the Russian frontier down to Khiva and Bokhara. The Chinese province of Kuldja was occupied during the time of the Tae Ping rebellion, but has since been

given back, minus a slight rectification of frontier. On the Pacific shore the vast territory of the Amur and the island of Saghalien, with the whole coast-line up to the borders of Corea, were annexed during this reign. The Sea of Okhotsk is now a Russian sea, and Russia has a long line of coast on the Sea of Japan, and is a close neighbour to the Japanese empire.

In 1867 Alexander sold to the United States the Russian territory in America now called Alaska for the sum of 7,200,000 dollars. It was discovered in 1741 by Vitus Behring, a Danish navigator in the service of Peter the Great, and had remained in the possession of Russia since that date. Excepting this solitary instance of voluntary retrocession for value received, the present Tsar reigns at this moment over every province and city which has at any time been annexed to the empire of his predecessors, which is more than can be said of any other potentate saving the President of the United States.

In the preceding chapters of this work I have attempted a slight historical sketch of the one thousand years of the history of Russia from the accession of Rurik to that of Alexander III., during which the trading republic of Novgorod has expanded into the most extensive military empire which has ever existed upon the surface of this planet.

Vast are the capabilities of its territory, both in Europe and in Asia, for the peaceful triumphs of colonisation, for the civilising influences of law, order, and education, and for the development of wealth by

mining, agriculture, and commerce. May the great Vetché bell of Novgorod, from its tower at Moscow, make its voice heard in the near future to a nation who shall be "strangers to wars, tumults, and seditions," as were the people of whom the three ambassadors discoursed to the Emperor Maurice.* May this great historic bell

"Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace."

* *Vide* chap. v., p. 68 ; chap. iii., p. 47.

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HISTORICAL MAP
of the
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
FROM IVAN THE GREAT

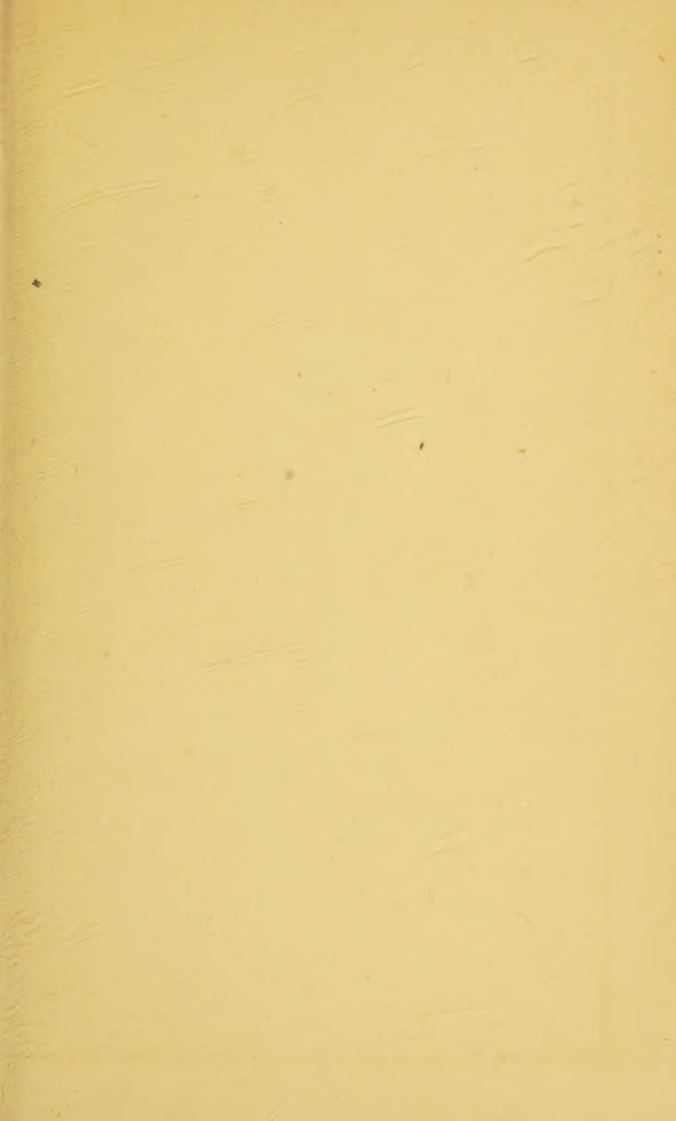


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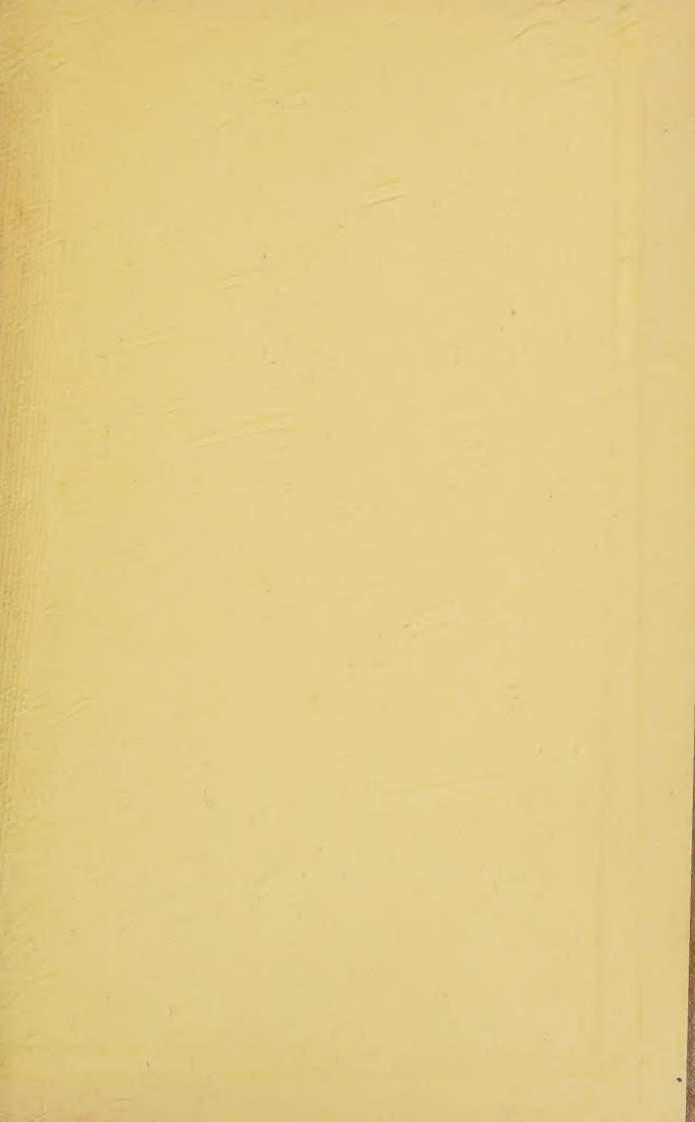
- Russia at the
Accession of
Ivan IV
I Peter the Great
II Peter the Great
III Peter the Great
IV Peter the Great
V Peter the Great
VI Peter the Great
VII Peter the Great
VIII Peter the Great
IX Peter the Great
X Peter the Great
XI Peter the Great
XII Peter the Great
XIII Peter the Great
XIV Peter the Great
XV Peter the Great

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

<i>Dates in Russian History.</i>	<i>Events in European History.</i>	<i>Dates in Russian History.</i>	<i>Events in European History.</i>	<i>Dates in Russian History.</i>	<i>Events in European History.</i>
A.D.	A.D.	A.D.	A.D.	A.D.	A.D.
Embassy to BAIAN, Khan of the Avars . . . 592	Mohammed, the Prophet 570—632	ST. ALEXANDER NEVSKY, son of Iaroslav II., died . . . 1263	Frederick William IV. 1840—1861	VASILII IV. (Chouisky). Episode of the "false Dmitrii," and invasion of Russia by the Poles and Swedes . . . 1605—1613	William became King of Prussia . . . 1861
RURIK, founder of the Russian Monarchy . . 862—879	Pope Gregory the Great sends Augustine to England. Baptism of Ethelbert, King of Kent . . 596	IAROSLAW III., son of Iaroslav II., died . . . 1271	William became German Emperor . . . 1871	MICHAEL ROMANOFF, descended by the female line from Andrew, brother of St. Alexander Nevski . . . 1613—1645	
<i>Grand Princes of Kieff.</i>	Charles the Bald, King of France . . . 841—879	VASILII, son of Iaroslav II., died . . . 1276		ALEXIS, son of Michael, died . . . 1676	<i>England.</i>
IGOR, son of Rurik, killed . . . 945	Alfred the Great . . . 871—901	DMITRII, son of Alexander Nevski, died . . . 1294	The Turks under Orchan first arrive in Europe . . 1356	FEODOR III., son of Alexis, died . . . 1682	George I. 1714—1727
OLGA, widow of Igor, Regent . . . 862—879	Rollo conquers Normandy . . 912	ANDREW, son of Alexander Nevski, died . . . 1304	Novgorod excluded from the Hanseatic League . . . 1388	IVAN V. and PETER the Great, sons of Alexis, joint reigns . . . 1682—1696	George II. 1727—1760
SVIATOSLAW, son of Igor, killed . . . 973	Miscislus I., first Christian King of Poland . . . 962—992	MICHAEL, son of Iaroslav III., executed by the Tartars . . . 1320	Battle of Creçy . . . 1346	Ivan died . . . 1696	George III. 1760—1820
IAROPOLK, son of Sviatoslaw, killed . . . 980	Olaf Tryggveson, King of Norway, killed . . . 1000	GEORGE, grandson of Alexander Nevski, deposed by the Tartars; killed by his successor, Dmitrii . . 1323	The Turks under Amurath I. conquer Roumelia, Bulgaria, and Servia . . 1359—1389	PETER the Great died . . 1725	George IV. 1820—1830
VLADIMIR I., son of Sviatoslaw, died . . . 1015	St. Olaf, King of Norway, killed . . . 1030	DMITRII, son of Michael, killed . . . 1324	Wat Tyler's Rebellion . . 1381	Siege of Narva. Defeat of the Russians by Charles XII. 1700	William I. 1830—1837
SVIATOPOLK II., son of Iaropolk, deposed . . . 1033	Canute died . . . 1036	ALEXANDER, Prince of Tver, son of Michael, deposed . . . 1328	Timour the Tartar invades India by Cabul and the Attock, and storms Delhi . 1398	Battle of Pultava. Defeat of Charles XII. by Peter . 1709	Victoria ascended the throne 1837
IAROSLAW, son of Vladimir, died . . . 1054	Pope Leo IX. excommunicates the Greek Church . 1054		Timour defeats the Turks under Bajazet at the Battle of Angora . . . 1402	CATHERINE I., widow of Peter the Great . . . 1725—1727	
ISIASLAW, son of Iaroslav, killed . . . 1078	Battle of Hastings . . . 1066	<i>Grand Princes of Moscow, subject to the Tartars.</i>	Battle of Agincourt . . . 1415	PETER II., son of Alexis, the son of Peter the Great, died . . . 1730	<i>France.</i>
VSEVOLOD I., son of Iaroslav, died . . . 1093	First Crusade under Peter the Hermit . . . 1096	IVAN I., KALITA, grandson of Alexander Nevski, died . . . 1340	End of the Byzantine Empire . . . 1453	ANNA, daughter of Ivan V., died . . . 1740	Louis XIV. 1643—1715
SVIATOPOLK II., son of Isiaslaw, died . . . 1113	Second Crusade under Louis VII. and Conrad III. . . 1144	IVAN II., son of Ivan I., died . . . 1358	Pattle of Barnet . . . 1471	IVAN VI., grandson of Catherine, elder sister of Anna, deposed . . . 1741	Louis XV. 1715—1774
VLADIMIR II., Monomachus, son of Vsevolod, died . 1125	Third Crusade under Frederick Barbarossa, Philip Augustus, and Richard Cœur de Lion . . . 1187—1192	DMITRII Donskoi, son of Ivan II., died . . . 1389	Mahomet II. subdues the Crimea . . . 1475	Killed in prison . . . 1764	Louis XVI. 1774—1793
MSTISLAW, son of Vladimir, died . . . 1132	Fourth Crusade. Baldwin Emperor of Constantinople . . . 1203	SIMEON the Proud, son of Ivan I., died . . . 1353	Conquest of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella. First voyage of Columbus to America . . . 1492	ELIZABETH, daughter of Peter the Great and Catherine I. 1741—1761	First Republic . . . 1793—1804
IAROPOLK, son of Vladimir, died . . . 1139		IVAN II., son of Ivan I., died . . . 1358	Pope Alexander VI. reigned . 1492—1503	Battle of the Great and Catherine I. 1741—1761	Napoleon Emperor . . 1804—1815
VIATCHESLAW, son of Vladimir, deposed . . . 1146		DMITRII Donskoi defeats Mamai, Khan of Serai, at the Battle of Koulikovo . 1380	Battle of Flodden . . . 1513	Battle of Kunersdorf. The Russians defeat Frederick the Great 1759	Louis XVIII. 1815—1816
IGOR, descended from Iaroslav, deposed . . . 1146		Toctamish, Khan of Serai, burns Moscow . . . 1382	Abdication of Charles V. . 1555	PETER III., son of Anna of Holstein, the eldest daughter of Peter the Great, deposed and killed . 1762	Charles X. 1824—1830
ISIASLAW, son of Mstislaw, died . . . 1154		Timour burns Serai and Astrakan, and invades Russia . . . 1395	First collision between Russia and Turkey . . . 1569	CATHERINE II., widow of Peter III., died . . . 1796	Louis Philippe . . . 1830—1848
GEORGE, Dolgorouki, son of Vladimir II., died . . 1157		VASILII I., son of Dmitrii Donskoi, died . . . 1425	Massacre of St. Bartholomew . . . 1572	Partitions of Poland, 1772, 1793, 1795	Second Republic . . 1848—1852
<i>Grand Princes of Vladimir.</i>		VASILII II., the Blind, son of Vasilii, died . . . 1462	Murder of William the Silent, Prince of Orange . 1584	PAUL, son of Peter III. and Catherine II., assassinated . . . 1801	Napoleon III. Emperor 1852—1870
ANDREW, son of George, killed . . . 1175		Russia emancipated from the Tartars . . . 1480	Destruction of the Spanish Armada . . . 1588	ALEXANDER I., eldest son of Paul, died . . . 1825	Third Republic proclaimed 1870
MICHAEL, son of George, died . . . 1177		<i>Grand Princes of all the Russias.</i>	Death of Philip II. . . . 1598	Napoleon's Invasion of Russia. Burning of Moscow . . . 1812	
VSEVOLOD II., son of George, died . . . 1213		IVAN III., the Great, son of Vasilii the Blind . . 1462—1505	Gunpowder Plot of Guy Fawkes . . . 1605	NICHOLAS, third son of Paul, died . . . 1855	<i>Poland.</i>
GEORGE, son of Vsevolod II., deposed . . . 1216		VASILII III., the Brave, son of Ivan III., died . 1534	Assassination of Henry IV. of France . . . 1610	The Crimean War . . . 1854—1856	John Sobieski King . . 1674—1696
CONSTANTINE, son of Vsevolod II., died . . . 1218			Execution of Strafford . . 1641	ALEXANDER II., son of Nicholas, assassinated . 1881	Augustus II., Elector of Saxony, King . . . 1696—1733
GEORGE, reinstated; killed by the Tartars . . . 1238		<i>Tears of all the Russias.</i>	Execution of Charles I. . . 1649	EMANICIPATION OF THE SERFS War with Turkey. Treaty of Berlin 1877—1878	Augustus III. King . . 1733—1763
Battle of the Kalka . . . 1224		IVAN IV., the Terrible, son of Vasilii the Brave, died . . . 1584	Death of Cromwell . . . 1658	ALEXANDER III., son of Alexander II., ascended the throne . . . 1881	Stanislaus Poniatowski last King 1764—1795
<i>Grand Princes of Vladimir subject to the Tartars.</i>		FEODOR, son of Ivan IV., died . . . 1598	John Sobieski defeats the Turks under the walls of Vienna 1683		<i>Turkey.</i>
IAROSLAW II., son of Vsevolod II. 1238—1246		(The direct male line of Rurik ends.)			Mahomet IV. 1648—1687
SVIATOSLAW, son of Vsevolod II., deposed . . 1248					Solyman II. 1687—1691
MICHAEL, son of Iaroslav II., killed . . . 1250					Achmet II. 1691—1695
ANDREW, son of Iaroslav II. (ancestor of Michael Romanoff), deposed . . 1252					Mustapha II. 1695—1703
					Achmet III. 1703—1730
					Mahmoud I. 1730—1754
					Othman III. 1754—1757
					Mustapha III. 1757—1773
					Abdul Hamid I. 1773—1789
					Selim III. 1789—1807
					Mustapha IV. 1807—1808
					Mahmoud II. 1808—1839
					Abdul Medjid 1839—1861
					Abdul Aziz (deposed). 1861—1876
					Mourad V. (deposed), 30 May to 30 Aug. . . 1876
					Abdul Hamid II. ascended the throne . . . 1876
					<i>Decisive Battles.</i>
					Austerlitz 1805
					Jena 1806
					Beresina 1812
					Leipsic 1813
					Waterloo 1815
					Magenta and Solferino . 1859
					Sadowa 1866
					Sedan 1870









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